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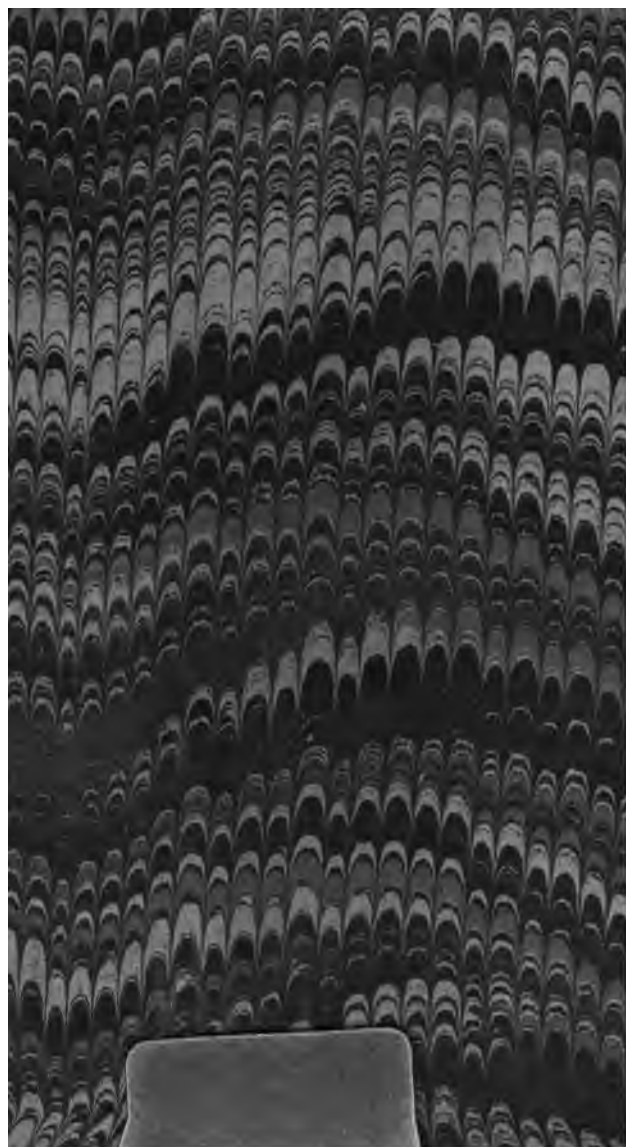
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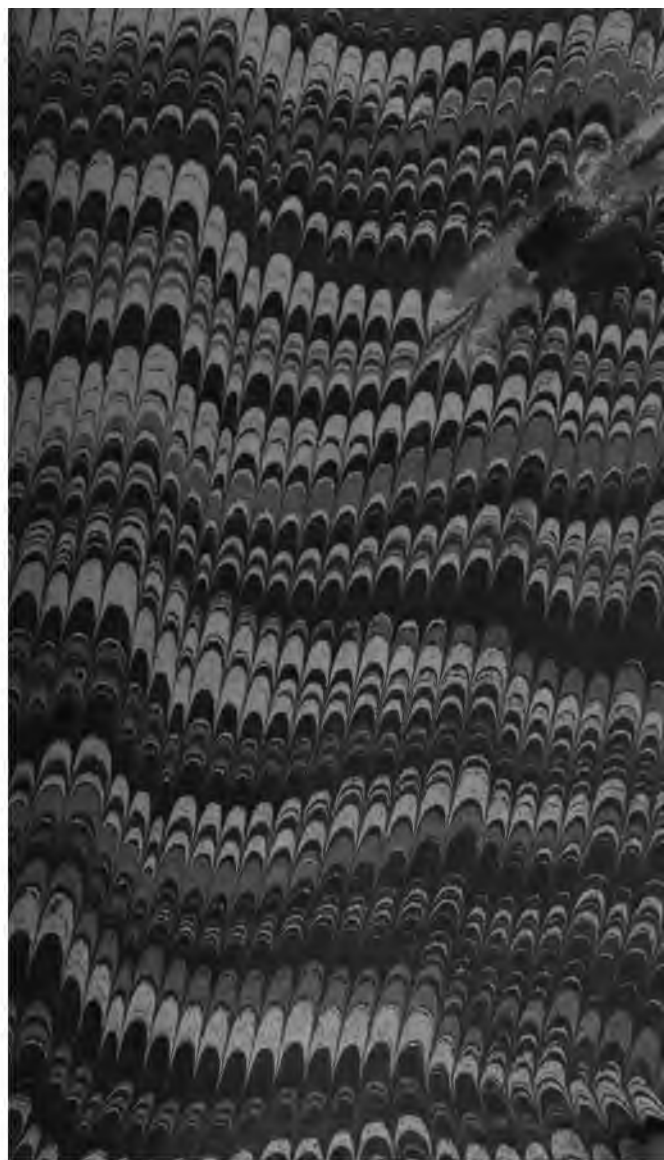
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SHORT
MEDITATIONS

FOR

EVERY DAY IN THE YEAR.

EDITED BY
WALTER FARQUHAR HOOK, D.D.,
VICAR OF LEEDS.

New Edition.

**Vol. II.—Lent to the Fourth Sunday
after Easter.**

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RICHARD SLOCOMBE.

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PREFACE.

THE following Meditations for Lent have been written on a different plan from those for other portions of the ecclesiastical year, because it is thought that more time may be bestowed by most persons on their devotions at this season. Let it be the aim, then, of all persons who use this little volume, to study with prayerful industry the sacred narrative of our Blessed LORD's Life, as shewn forth by the four Evangelists; and let all have the distinct object of this exercise in view, viz: that of living closer to our LORD, and by becoming more intimately acquainted with His most holy Life, to be better enabled to set up His pattern as our example for future guidance.

The following Meditations are intended as companions to such studies; and it is earnestly hoped that they will only be used as helps and beginnings to deeper and more holy meditations, which each must make in his own heart, in his own manner, and according to the peculiar nature of his own intellectual formation.

It is impossible to meditate upon what the mind does not embrace fully and firmly, and therefore an intimate acquaintance with all the bearings of the narrative or text must be gained before profitable meditation can be made. It must, therefore, be evident that the mere reading of the Gospels will not bring us into that intimate acquaintance with our LORD, which it should be our object in Lent to cultivate: no; we must enter our closet and shut the door; we must pray to our FATHER, and we must place ourselves near the scene of which we are reading, and ponder each word with

devout earnestness; then, as each day passes, we shall be more penetrated, as it were, with our LORD's presence; we shall stand by Him in the upper chamber; we shall see and feel the agony of the Cross; we shall watch by the calm grave; and dispose ourselves to bring the most costly spices and most precious ointments on the dawning of the glad Easter morn.

The Harmony of the Gospels which has been used in these Meditations is that of the learned Mr. GRESWELL, of Corpus Christi College, Oxford; which has been followed entirely in the arrangement of the subjects.

SHORT MEDITATIONS,

ETC.

Ash Wednesday.

THEREFORE ALSO NOW, SAITH THE LORD, TURN YE EVEN TO ME WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH FASTING, AND WITH WEEPING, AND WITH MOURNING.— Joel ii. 12.

O GOD, by Whose Providence Thy Church hath set apart this sacred season of Lent, that in it we may confess, and bewail, and repent us of our sins, and may consider more nearly our mortality, and that dust we are, and unto dust we shall return; grant that the meditation on the sufferings and Cross of our Redeemer may quench in me all proud conceits, and make me feel how highly favoured I shall be, if, by any crosses, or self-denials, or

mortifications here, I may be made ready to partake of Thy eternal glories hereafter, through the merits of JESUS CHRIST our LORD.

I will arise and go to my Father, and will say unto Him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and in Thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called Thy son. Yea, O my soul, arise; lift thyself out of thy old habits and evil associations, out of the mire of thy sins, and go to Thy Lord; keep close to Him during the ensuing Lent; turn unto Him with all Thy heart; shut out the world from thee; and if in the short space of forty days thou canst so repent and amend, and follow the divine pattern set thee by thy Lord, how happy wilt thou be to rise from thy ashes, and with heart and mind follow Thy Divine Saviour into His heavenly mansions!

But thou must first lay down thy plan, that this Lent may be indeed a season of turning unto Thy Lord with fasting from every evil desire, every corrupt imagination, every unbecoming wish; of weeping the bitter tears of true penitence for sins which rigid search and self-examination have brought to light; and of

mourning with that true penitential sorrow which the sad sight of that array of sins should call forth.

Consider, O my soul, the fitness of this spring tide for the holy exercises of penitence and mortification; and as thou seest the sun rise higher and higher in the heavens, so consider the Sun of righteousness which is shining out, and ascending higher and higher unto that day when it shall have brought all the elect to maturity in the eternal kingdom; and as the trees and flowers now begin to bud and burst forth, so ought virtues to bud, and most pure sobriety to put forth under the influence of that blessed Sun. And then consider the plentiful showers which nourish and strengthen the ground; let them remind thee of those showers of grace and dews of divine blessing which will fall upon those who follow the statutes and ordinances of the LORD to do them. Consider also, that as thou art to continue in penitence and humiliation for forty days, so Moses fasted forty days; and Elias went forty days without meat, but in the strength of the LORD; and forty days did the men of Nineveh continue in sack-cloth and ashes for their sins; and forty days did

the spies wander about the land of Canaan; and after forty days Noah opened the window of the ark.

Do Thou now, O LORD my God, open the windows of heaven, and send down upon me a supply of grace, that I may be enabled to spend this sacred season to my profit; and let me retire with my LORD into the desert, and there fast, and watch, and pray; for the Bridegroom has left us, therefore shall we fast and make ready for the time when He shall return again, and take us with Him to Sion, the mount of God.

Turn thee, therefore, to the LORD with all thy heart; not a heart divided between the world and heaven, but with all fixed upon the LORD. Burthen not thyself with over many observances, but choose those that thou canst pursue with regularity; abstain from all pleasant food, from all earthly amusements; put aside all outward ornaments; consult thy friend () as to what extent thou mayest carry thy bodily mortifications; set aside longer portions of time for devotion; attend more frequently in the LORD's sanctuary; devote two days in the week to more serious self-examina-

tion, and set more seriously to work to correct thy faults; increase thy alms, and be very careful that thou art not irritable or ill humoured to others. This is often the great trial in fasting, therefore watch thyself specially on that head; for how canst thou approach thy God after having behaved thyself unkindly and harshly towards those whom God places near to thee?

[Here stop, and enter into a review of thy past life; tell over all the particular instances in which thou hast most grievously sinned; say it over in words, and then make a summary of the sins thou hast committed; say over the list several times, then humble thyself before God, and say with sorrowful devotion:—]

Out of the deep of these my many and grievous sins I call to Thee, O LORD; LORD, hear my voice.

O let Thine ears consider well the weakness and utter helplessness of Thy servant; and listen, O LORD, to the voice of my complaint.

If Thou, LORD, the God of purity and holiness, should be extreme to mark and to measure our sins by Thine own perfectness, O LORD, who may abide it?

There is mercy with Thee, therefore will I fear the more to offend Thee, because Thou art so infinitely merciful to me.

I look for the LORD, without Him I am, and can do, nothing. My soul doth wait for Him, He is my only refuge; and in His word is my trust.

My soul flieth unto the LORD, for I know that He alone can protect and succour me, therefore before anything else, even before the morning watch, I betake myself to receive counsel from Him.

O Israel, trust in the LORD, for with the LORD there is mercy, yea, in Him alone shall we find mercy; and He has contrived a scheme of redemption for us, it is plenteous redemption; and He alone shall redeem Israel from all his sins.

First Thursday

IN LENT.

AND REND YOUR HEART, AND NOT YOUR GARMENTS, AND TURN
UNTO THE LORD YOUR GOD.— Joel ii. 13.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, Who hatest nothing that Thou hast made, and dost forgive the sins of all them that are penitent; create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of Thee, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through JESUS CHRIST our LORD. *Amen.*

Let me consider, that, in order to spend this season with profit, I must make myself thoroughly acquainted with the evil of my own heart, both as regards the past and the present. I must then look up and see that God cannot accept such a miserably corrupted offering as

such a heart would be, and I must then think of the sacrifice of the Cross, which appeased the Divine wrath, and prevented its falling upon me for those sins and wickednesses. I must then see the immense disproportion between the value of my heart and that blessed sacrifice which the SON of GOD offered. I must meditate upon all the bitter sufferings of the Sinless, caused by my guilt. And can I, after this view, return to any of my careless ways? Must I not rather fall down before the LORD, and in an agony of grief beg of Him to take revenge upon me for my manifold misdeeds? Can I cease to be troubled in spirit for the sufferings, for the wrath poured out upon the innocent Victim, the Lamb without blemish, and all for me? Oh, how I ought to detest those sins! And yet how feebly do I express my horror at myself, how little do I really feel the grief which ought to oppress me! O LORD, I beseech Thee wound, bruise, pierce, and soften this hard heart. Oh that it might be wrung with bitterness of grief for my sins! Oh that I could render unto the LORD the sacrifice of a wounded spirit! For I know that a broken and contrite heart, O my God, Thou wilt not despise.

Let me consider that I am to rend my heart, and not my garments. My sorrow is to be interior and real. I must not make a show of feeling, or an outward expression of sufferings, which are not the genuine outpourings of a contrite heart. I must not rend my garments and then turn to the world again, but I must rend my heart and turn unto the LORD my God. I feel that now I cannot detest my sins as I ought to do; I am deadened in feeling; I know that sin is detestable, and yet I cannot fully bring my mind to feel the grief which ought to oppress me for my own individual transgressions. I cannot rend my heart. To bring myself into this state must be the work of Lent. I must subdue myself by fasting; I must pray for illumination to see my sins as they really are; I must meditate on the sufferings, passion, and death of the Incarnate Son of God, until, melted into sorrow, I detest my sins, which were no less the occasion of that death than was the traitor Judas.

Let me conclude by resolving to cultivate a mortified spirit, to bring myself down to nothing, to consider myself as a very worm of the dust, and then to beg of God to create in

me a new heart, and to renew a right spirit within me.

O my soul, prostrate thyself before thy merciful Saviour, and beg of Him to look upon thee in mercy. Thou art dull, and heavy, and dry ; beseech Him to raise thee to such profitable meditation on His meritorious sufferings, that thou mayest sorrow in earnest for thy sins, and truly repent of them.

First Friday

IN LENT.

TURN UNTO THE LORD YOUR GOD.— Joel ii. 13.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, Who hatest nothing that Thou hast made, and dost forgive the sins of all them that are penitent; create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of Thee, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through JESUS CHRIST our LORD. *Amen.*

I consider my sins, how many and grievous they are; I consider those actions which are in themselves good, all my better moments, my most recollected thoughts, my prayers; how are they all dimmed with imperfections! I seem as if I could do nothing well or properly. Even when most engaged in prayer, a little

thought and idle look spoils all. Oh ! wretched man that I am, who can deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD; to Him must I turn; He alone can deliver me, and to frequent meditation on all that He has done for me must I look as the means of raising me nearer to Him. Oh ! may my earnest meditation on His blessed passion, during this Lent, draw me after Him, so that I may go forth into the world again, strengthened to bear my cross, whatever it may be, with courage, cheerfulness, and entire resignation to His blessed will.

Turn unto thy LORD, O my soul, and as the season approaches when thou wilt celebrate the yearly memory of CHRIST's Passion, so prepare thyself on this and every weekly return of the day of the Lord's most bitter death, that thou mayest in heart and mind follow that most innocent Lamb in all the torments which He underwent as a sacrifice for thy sins. Turn thee and behold Him; station thyself near His Cross; and by earnest meditation endeavour to partake more plentifully of the mercy and grace which flow from those fountains of life, His precious wounds. Thou lookest for mercy in

thus turning to thy LORD ; thou must turn with thy whole heart, by faith, hope, love, and repentance. In meditating on CHRIST's Passion, thou contempest the great object of thy faith, the only ground of thy hope, the most pressing motive of love, and the strongest and most effectual inducement to repentance. Oh turn not away, then, but be constant and ever present with thy Saviour in His most dolorous sufferings.

Bow down Thine ear, O LORD, and hear me, for I am poor, destitute of good works, clothed with filthy rags, and in misery from my desolateness and helplessness.

Preserve Thou my soul, for it is Thine by purchase, and has been made holy by Thy gracious redemption. My God, save Thy servant that putteth his trust in Thee.

Be merciful unto me, O LORD, Thou God and Father of mercies ; for, knowing how merciful Thou art, I will make bold to call daily upon Thee.

Comfort the soul of Thy servant with Thine everlasting consolations, with the hope of Thy pardon, with the perception of Thy presence,

with the help of Thy Spirit, for unto Thee, O LORD, do I lift up my soul.

For Thou, LORD, art good and gracious, and of great mercy unto all them that call upon Thee.

Give ear, LORD, unto my prayer, when I beg of Thee pardon for my past sins, and strength to avoid them for the future. I ask only to sit at Thy feet, O LORD; oh ponder the voice of my humble desires.

In the time of my trouble I will call upon Thee, for Thou alone canst help me, and Thou hearest me.

Teach me Thy way, O LORD, and I will walk in Thy truth. Oh knit my heart unto Thee, that I may fear to do anything which will disgrace my profession.

I thank Thee, O LORD my God, for all Thy long-suffering and mercy towards me; with all my heart do I thank Thee, and will praise Thy Name for evermore.

For great is Thy mercy towards me; Thou hast redeemed me with Thy precious blood, and hast delivered my soul from the nethermost hell.

Thou, O LORD, art full of compassion and

mercy, long-suffering, plenteous in goodness and truth.

O turn Thee, then, unto me, and have mercy upon me ; without Thy help I can do nothing ; give Thy strength unto Thy servant.

Shew some token upon me for good, that they who hate me may see it and be ashamed, and that they may know that it is Thou, LORD, that hast holpen me and comforted me.

First Saturday

IN LENT.

FOR WHERE YOUR TREASURE IS, THERE WILL YOUR HEART
BE ALSO. — St. Matt. vi. 21.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, Who hatest nothing that Thou hast made, and dost forgive the sins of all them that are penitent; create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of Thee, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through JESUS CHRIST our LORD. *Amen.*

Let me consider that if I place my affections on worldly objects, I shall soon lose all; the moth will devour, the rust corrupt, my most precious things; and then what shall I have for the long, never-ending eternity, but a rayless, joyless, existence, without hope, without

interest? The world does not stretch out its attractions and its influence beyond the grave; all will crumble into dust, and the earthen treasure-vessels will be a mass of ruin.

Let me consider, then, that something beyond and above this world must be my aim. I must look after incorruptible things, for they are eternal.

My treasure must be "laid up" in heaven; one thing must be put upon another, and the heap must reach even to God Himself, Who is the Author and Finisher of all. But like the little hoardings of a child, my treasure must be begun, and the foundation laid by my parents; the windows of heaven must be opened, and the Spirit of God sent down upon me; from the time I am made a child of God I may begin to build up my treasure; I *may* begin, but oh, how awful is the thought that it depends upon myself whether I *do* begin! And upon the exertions I make every thing depends; for God helps no one who does not himself strive to work out his salvation with fear and trembling. But also let me consider that though I may plant and water, it is God alone Who gives the increase. My treasure must be laid up in

God's way, and in his time; and though I must go on in my earnest endeavours to cultivate every grace, and improve every virtue, yet I may feel that my poor strivings have added nothing; I feel desolate and alone, and no comfort appears either on the right hand or on the left.

O LORD, I am poor and in misery; LORD, I have no man to help me! Keep thyself low, O my soul; chasten thyself and bewail thy many sins. Look up to the cross,—that suffering and bleeding Form was nailed there for thy sins; He was buried that thou mightest stoop low, and bury thy sins in His tomb; He rose that thou mightest rise above thy former nature and live a new life; He ascended; this glorious and gracious Saviour, Who is, thou must now perceive, thine all,—wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, redemption; He Who is every thing, and does every thing, and gives every thing, is gone into heaven; without Him thou canst do nothing, He is thy treasure, He is in heaven! Here is the solution of all thy difficulty, O my soul. Thou seest that thine own works, imperfect as they are, can never be a treasure worth laying up in heaven.

Thou must go to **JESUS**, and endeavour to become His by thy earnest strivings to do the will of the **FATHER**, that will which **JESUS** did and accomplished in all perfection. Strive to be like Him, to live close to Him, to have a deeper sorrow for thy sins — the occasion of His sufferings; to love Him — the cause of all the hope thou canst entertain; and then, if thou lookest or longest after anything else, thou art indeed harder than the nether millstone. But look, O my soul, to thy Treasure, thy glorified **LORD**, sitting in thy nature at the right hand of the **FATHER**, occupied in continual intercession; He, the Great Head of the Church sits there until the whole body is complete in every member, and will reign with the **FATHER** in glory everlasting. Keep thyself there in heart and mind, my soul, and make use of this Lent, and every other opportunity, for purifying thyself from thy earthly imperfections; and look on every member of **CHRIST'S** Church who is taken from our sight, having made this earth no abiding city, as one added to thy treasure in heaven, as a living stone of that great Building, whose Headstone is He, Who, being thy only treasure, should have entire possession of thy heart.

First Sunday in Lent.

THEN WAS JESUS LED UP OF THE SPIRIT INTO THE WILDER-
NESS TO BE TEMPTED OF THE DEVIL. — St. Matt. iv. 1.

GRANT me grace, O LORD, to resist the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil, and with pure heart and mind to follow Thee, the only God, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD. *Amen.*

Let me now go with my LORD into the wilderness, and let me attentively consider all His actions, for they will afford me an example of many virtues.

O the depth of the wisdom of GOD! How camest Thou, O my Saviour, to be so tempted! That SPIRIT, whereby Thou wast conceived as man, and Which was One with Thee and the FATHER as GOD, led Thee into the wilderness to be tempted of Satan. While Thou didst teach us to pray to Thy Father, "Lead us not into

temptation," Thou meantest to instruct us that if the same Spirit lead us not into this perilous way, we go not into it. We have the same blessed Conductor. The Spirit led our blessed LORD, It did not drive Him, so absolutely conformable was His will to His Father's. O may I imitate Thee, blessed Saviour, though I cannot reach unto Thee. All Thine are led by the Spirit. O teach me to forget that I have a will of my own.

My Saviour in the wilderness passes His time in solitude; He fasts; He watches; He prays; for forty days this Man — greater than Moses, mightier than Elias — fasted. He had no faulty desires of the flesh to be subdued; there was no possibility of a freer and easier ascent of the soul to God being attained by Him Who was already perfectly united to God; but as for us He would suffer death, so also for us would He undergo hunger, that we might learn by fasting to prepare for temptations. In fasting so long, He manifested His power; and by extending it no further, His manhood.

It is by retirement, prayer, and fasting, that I must seek to attain that purity of heart, without which I cannot see God.

Frequent and earnest prayer must be resorted to in retirement, that is, where the spirit is so undistracted by external things as to rise undisturbed to God. Retirement of body, while the mind is wandering about among the persons and pursuits of the world, is a mockery. The spirit must be in the wilderness, and must be trained to insensibility respecting outward things, by mortification; fasting is one means of bringing the mind and the spirit into subjection.

Sit down, therefore, O my soul, solitary and alone; forget thine own people and thy father's house; and rise to contemplate thy Saviour: He fasted forty days and nights, and then He was an hungered. Now was the time that the tempter came to Him; and he, with much subtlety, both urged Him to shew His godly power and to satisfy the cravings of His human nature. But mark the dignity with which our LORD neither denied nor asserted Himself to be the Son of God, and convicted the enemy by the authority of Scripture.

In every temptation there is a show of good, either of the body, or mind, or estate. The first is the lust of the flesh in any carnal desire;

the second, the pride of heart, or of life ; the third, the lust of the eyes. In all these ways was our blessed LORD subjected to temptation. The stones to be made bread was a motion to carnal appetite ; the guard and attendance of angels, a motion to pride ; the kingdoms of the earth and their glory were offered, and there was the temptation to covetousness and ambition. I see here that, when in solitude, in fasting and prayer, I am peculiarly liable to the assaults of the devil, who will be continually insinuating some means of easing myself of my present discomforts, and of bettering my condition ; but in this case follow, O my soul, thy Saviour's most holy example ; resist the devil and he will flee from thee ; keep up a constant warfare against his attacks ; but do so with the meekness and humility of our dearest LORD, Who underwent the grossest insults from the wicked one, and never either vindicated Himself or reproached His enemy, until He sent him away with "Get thee hence," in such a manner as that the evil one fled away instantly.

Then came angels and ministered unto Him. O blessed rest from the battle waged against Satan ! Angels came down from the heavenly

dwelling of the blessed SON of GOD to minister to the human nature which He had condescendingly assumed, in order to enable mankind, and thee, also, O my soul, in like manner to endure hunger, and fatigue, and hard living, without yielding to the temptations which such a life will bring upon thee. Yea, O blessed Saviour, how glorious was it for Thee, how happy for us, that Thou wast thus tempted. Had not Satan tempted Thee, how shouldst Thou have overcome? Without blows there can be no victory, no triumph. The first Adam was tempted and overcome; the second Adam, to repair that injury, doth vanquish in being tempted. Now have we not a Saviour Who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but such a One as was in all points tempted as we are, but without sin. How boldly, therefore, may we go unto the Throne of Grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace in the time of need. Now we see what manner of adversary we have, how he fights, how he is resisted, how overcome. Now our very temptations afford us comfort, in that we see the dearer we are to God the more obnoxious we are to this trial; neither ought we to be discouraged by the

heinousness of the sins to which we may be tempted, since we see the SON of GOD Himself was solicited to infidelity, covetousness, and idolatry.

I thank Thee, therefore, O my Saviour, for Thy temptation; O let me not be tempted beyond my powers of resistance; O may I ever find a way of escape!

Monday

AFTER FIRST SUNDAY.

AND LOOKING UPON JESUS AS HE WALKED, HE SAITH,
BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD!—St. John i. 36.

GRANT me grace, O LORD, to resist the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil, and with pure heart and mind to follow Thee, the only God, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD. *Amen.*

As soon as John the Baptist was taught, by the descent of the HOLY SPIRIT, that JESUS was the SON of GOD, he instantly preaches Him to all who come near him. Before, he had preached Him as one “among them,” but “not known;” as “coming after him,” but “preferred before him.” He now looks upon JESUS, full of love and admiration; at Him, the latchet of Whose shoes he is not worthy to unloose. JESUS walks, His ministry is begun, He brings

glad tidings of great joy, Behold the Lamb of God! John makes no long discourse, his eloquence is no more needed, he has but to bring men to CHRIST, knowing that they would have no more need of his witness.

The Lamb was offered at the daily sacrifice; one in the morning, one in the evening; its blood sanctified only to the purifying of the flesh. The Lamb of God, holy, harmless, and undefiled, came to lay down His life, a full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world. He alone and singly is the Lamb without spot, without sin; He alone is the Lamb of God, for by His blood alone can men be redeemed.

O Lamb of God, most pure, most meek, most lovely, Thou hast indeed made a sacrifice for my sins! Thou wast brought to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb so didst Thou not open Thy mouth. O grant that I may follow Thee in all the passages of Thy life as Thou walkest along, in Thy loveliness, Thy meekness, Thy purity; and give me the grace to enable me so to imitate Thy perfect example that I may be made a partaker of Thy all-sufficient sacrifice.

Two disciples of John heard him speak, and they followed JESUS. Our blessed LORD turned and asked them what they sought. Thus, O my soul, do thou follow thy LORD in unhesitating obedience; and as to the two disciples He vouchsafed to shew His face, so, if in like manner thou followest Him, He will cause the light of His countenance to shine upon thee; and as the disciples request to know where the LORD dwells, so do thou enquire, in order that thou mayest make no short stay with Him, but abide in His company to gain more immediate initiation into the secrets of His kingdom, and to profit more constantly by His instructions.

Then will CHRIST invite thee to come and see His dwelling; He will give thee free access unto Him, and blessed will be the days and nights that thou spendest with thy LORD.

Our blessed LORD, Whose life was now to become a series of journies and toils, in the prosecution of His ministry on the day following went into Galilee, and there He findeth Philip; He said unto him, "Follow Me." O my soul, when thy LORD seeks Thee, and by His special invitation invites thee to follow Him, take as example Philip of Bethsaida; and upon the first

token of Thy LORD's presence, as did Philip upon hearing His gentle but commanding voice, follow Him; and persuade any, over whom thou hast an influence, to do likewise; for observe, that in bringing Nathanael to our LORD, Philip brought a good man into a position to profit greatly in eternal things. JESUS said, upon seeing Nathanael, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile."

Blessed art Thou, O gracious Saviour, for all Thy instructions to us! Thou shewest in this character of Nathanael the spirit and temper Thou admirest in men; Thou hast hallowed simplicity of spirit by receiving it near Thee—hast caused it to become a virtue, an evangelical duty.

Christian simplicity does not bring discredit upon Christian prudence; for simplicity believes no evil, and speaks nothing but its thoughts, and has no pretences; and, therefore, if the fountain be pure, the stream flowing from it will be also pure, and perfect guileless integrity will shield its possessor from every evil, if he be in the way following JESUS, the most pure Lamb of God. Admire, O my soul, the simplicity of Nathanael's faith; it was produced by an

ere argument not demonstrative, but it was accepted as sufficient, for to it ~~was~~ revealed mysteries which belonged to the kingdom of heaven. There must be no guile, no reserve, in thy belief, O my soul. Thou must give thyself wholly up to thy Lord, and then, hereafter, heaven will open to thee, and thou shalt see and hear such things as pass man's understanding.

Tuesday

AFTER FIRST SUNDAY.

NOW WHEN HE WAS IN JERUSALEM AT THE PASSOVER, IN THE FEAST DAY, MANY BELIEVED IN HIS NAME, WHEN THEY SAW THE MIRACLES WHICH HE DID. BUT JESUS DID NOT COMMIT HIMSELF UNTO THEM, BECAUSE HE KNEW ALL MEN.— St. John ii. 23, 24.

GRANT me grace, O LORD, to resist the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil, and with pure heart and mind to follow Thee, the only God, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD. *Amen.*

Shortly after the calling of Nathanael, our blessed LORD went to Cana in Galilee, where He performed His first miracle. He tarried not there, but went to Capernaum, where He abode a few days with His mother, and brethren, and His disciples. He gave a short time to His mother, thus satisfying the claims that His human nature had upon Him, and to shew

us that the claims of kindred are not to be neglected even when the highest vocation is allotted to us. But our blessed LORD must be about His Father's business, and He therefore began His journey to Jerusalem; the Jews' passover was at hand, and His work lay there. The distance is great, probably sixty or seventy miles. And here let me consider this first great toil of our blessed LORD. He had a nature like mine, subject to like pains and feelings of fatigue. I have hitherto thought nothing of this great journey of our LORD, but let me remember His weariness, as foot-sore and heated He journeyed to attend this first passover during His ministry. I am always disposed to make much of any little exertion I undergo, and weariness and fatigue make me complain bitterly of the labour which has caused them; but in attending my Saviour through His painful ministry, let me take pattern by the uncomplaining way in which He journeys along, having only His great object in view — "My Father's business."

He reaches Jerusalem; He goes to the Temple, that in His Father's house He may hold communion with Him on Whose errand He is

journeying ; He finds unholy traffic going on in the Temple. Go with Him, my soul, and mark the whip of small cords with which He drives out the miserable merchants. O may thy sins never be converted into such a lash ; may they never drive thee from the presence of thy God !

My soul, thou dost intend to frequent the Temple more diligently during this Lent than at ordinary times ; resolve to go this day with thy Saviour, and pray Him to drive away all wandering thoughts and worldly imaginations, and purge away all earthly things from thee, that thou mayest remain with Him and profit by the instruction which, through the Church, He deals out to thee.

Our LORD remains at Jerusalem ; many see the miracles that He did ; they believed in His Name. But JESUS did not commit Himself to them. Let me here see the different faith of these men to that of Nathanael. To these our LORD did not commit Himself ; His Omniscient gaze saw that they were not Israelites indeed, in whom there was no guile ; He saw that they acted only on the impulse given them by the sight of His miracles, and that theirs was no

living true faith; He saw, we may suppose, that these very men, who now believed in His Name, would hereafter, with blood-thirsty rage, cry out, "Crucify Him!" O my soul, how different is it to believe in His Name from doing the works which He commands! Be ever mindful that thy Lord, although gracious and merciful, yet sees what is in man; and if thou makest professions only, and follow Him not in deed and in truth, He will not give thee His gracious help; thou mayest see His miracles and hear His words, but as the body without the soul is dead, so is faith without works dead also.

Be not, therefore, confident and bold; be ever anxious and mistrustful, for thou here seest that what escapes thy knowledge cannot escape the eternal Judge.

Wednesday

AFTER FIRST SUNDAY.

JESUS SAITH UNTO THEM, MY MEAT IS TO DO THE WILL OF
HIM THAT SENT ME, AND TO FINISH HIS
WORK. — St. John iv. 34.

GRANT me grace, O LORD, to resist the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil, and with pure heart and mind to follow Thee, the only God, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD. *Amen.*

When our LORD understood that John was cast into prison and that the Pharisees were envious at him for the multitudes who resorted to His baptism, He left Judea and came into Galilee. In His journey He was obliged to pass Sychar, a city of Samaria. Behold our blessed Lord journeying along under the heat of a mid-day sun, until He came to a well, where, being wearied, he sat down while His

them and said, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work."

Thus, O my soul, do thou observe thy gracious Saviour's words. He had only one will with His FATHER; fit meat then is it for the Son of GOD to do that will; He alone is capable of accomplishing it. And is there nothing in this, O my soul, for thee to imitate? Canst thou not in this respect endeavour to follow thy Saviour's pattern? Canst thou not also so earnestly endeavour to do the will of GOD, that it may stand with thee before all things, and every desire and necessity of the flesh may be put aside, and yield to the one great end and object of thy being, to do thy FATHER's will? Thou knowest that our LORD had before the eyes of His Omniscience all that it would cost Him to do His FATHER's will; He foresaw the life of pain and toil (He even then was undergoing some of the pains) that in His human nature He must suffer; He saw that this perfect acquiescence in the Divine Will, would, before He had finished His work, cost Him an agony; He had to undergo the tortures of a struggle with the human will, that struggle which caused the great drops of blood to course

Wednesday after First Sunday. 39

each other down His face in the intensity of the agony, but He was "content to do it." O Divine Saviour, what thanks, what praise can I offer unto Thee for thus triumphing over Thy human nature, in order that mine might be enabled to come under the law of grace; O give me strength effectually to struggle with my own will, to bring it entirely under subjection to Thine; then will hunger and thirst, heat and cold, pain of body and anxiety of mind be acceptable to me, for I shall recognize in them some likeness to the sufferings of Thee, my Saviour; and as it was Thy meat to do Thy FATHER's will, so let it be my endeavour to gain some of that heavenly food even while I am on earth.

O my soul, remember that when thy Saviour uttered the words, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me," He had in view thy salvation, along with that of others; for thee did He suffer this toil, and hunger, and thirst; for thee did He will to undergo such infinite agonies; and shall all this be in vain? Canst thou, after considering the life of toil which He spent, the death of pain which He suffered, canst Thou continue any longer in careless

apathy? Wilt thou return after this Lent to thy enjoyments, and occupations, and pleasures, without being a sadder and more chastened spirit? Wilt thou not strain every nerve to do thy FATHER's will, and to finish His work; by doing, to thy utmost ability, thy duty in the state of life to which God has called thee; and by loving and serving, worshipping and obeying Him with all thy heart, mind, soul, and strength? Resolve to give thyself up to this endeavour; count all loss, so that thou mayest win thy Saviour, and make it thy meat and drink to do thy heavenly FATHER's will.

Thursday

AFTER FIRST SUNDAY.

BUT HE WENT OUT, AND BEGAN TO PUBLISH IT MUCH, AND TO BLAZE ABROAD THE MATTER, INSOMUCH THAT JESUS COULD NO MORE OPENLY ENTER INTO THE CITY, BUT WAS WITHOUT IN DESERT PLACES : AND THEY CAME TO HIM FROM EVERY QUARTER. — St. Mark i. 45.

GRANT me grace, O LORD, to resist the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil, and with pure heart and mind to follow Thee, the only God, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD. *Amen.*

Let me to-day follow our blessed LORD as He journeyed from Sychar into Galilee. The mighty works that He did at the feast at Jerusalem are known there, for the Galileans attended the Passover. And when He came to Cana there came to Him a nobleman from Capernaum, whose son was sick ; and He healed him.

Then did our blessed **LORD** go to Nazareth. He went into the synagogue, and **there** declared His mission, as foretold by prophecy. **Hear**, O my soul, thy gracious **LORD** say, "This day is this Scripture fulfilled." Yea, O blessed Saviour, my soul responds to Thy declaration; Thou hast indeed preached glad tidings of great joy to the poor. To those whose spirit is poor Thou impartest the riches of Thy consolations; to the poor in estate Thou hast given the dignity of being like unto Thee, Who didst not know where to lay Thy head. Thou dost heal the broken in heart; for how often hast Thou said, "Thy sins are forgiven thee"—"Thy son liveth"—"The maid is not dead but sleepeth." Thou hast preached deliverance to captives, to those tied and bound by the chain of their sins, by shewing them the way of Thy Cross; Thou hast opened the eyes of the blind to see the nothingness of everything where Thou art not; Thou hast poured oil and wine into the wounds of the bruised, by giving them of Thy consolations, by washing them in the water from Thy precious side, and by bathing them in the blood from Thy wounds—those wounds which are to my soul indeed the wounds

of a friend. But the Jews were blind, and would not see; they knew Him not; and when they heard His gracious words they were filled with wrath, and thrust Him out of the city, and brought Him to the brow of the hill that they might cast Him down headlong, but He, passing through the midst of them, went His way. Oh, fearful state of blindness! Such happened to the Jews, and the same may happen to me if I open not my soul to receive the instructions which the most gracious Saviour affords. Let me live by Thee, and hang upon every word that proceeds out of Thy lips, O blessed LORD; the law of Thy mouth is dearer unto me than thousands of gold and silver.

Let me now pass from Nazareth with our dear LORD, and dwell with Him at Capernaum. Let me hear Him preach, saying, Repent; and let my soul echo back the sound; repent, repent, O hard heart, the kingdom of God is at hand, the LORD is here! He is come unto His own, His by purchase, by adoption; O receive Him and repent in time, lest thou be cast into outer darkness, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Here, at Capernaum, on the shores of the sea of Galilee, did our LORD call Simon Peter, and Andrew his brother, to leave all and follow Him; and here did our LORD cast out a spirit of an unclean devil from a man, and the devil confessed and was subject unto Him; and all the people were amazed.

Now our blessed LORD healed Peter's wife's mother; and also He healed many that were diseased and possessed with devils. O dearest LORD, what a life of continual toil is Thine; Thou didst indeed take our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses; how can I ever thank Thee sufficiently for the things that Thou didst and sufferedst for me? and how can I ever complain when, in the midst of toil or bodily infirmity, I shall feel the flesh weak while the spirit may be willing?

In the morning, before the day began to dawn, behold our LORD proceeding to a solitary place to pray; this He did not because He needed prayer, but to give us an example. He had been employed actively during the preceding day; He knew that multitudes would soon resort to Him again; and He retired into a solitary place to shew us the need of prayer

and retirement when we are most actively engaged in the pursuits of our calling. The labours of the world are apt to bring the soul down to a level with the employments which occupy the body. Something is needed to raise the soul that it may live again with its LORD, and may recollect that its destiny is not amid the strifes and business of this life; to retire, and then to lift up the heart in earnest supplications to its LORD and Maker is our first duty; and blessed be GOD Who has placed me in the Church where such times of retirement are pointed out, as during this season of Lent, when we may look well if there be any way of wickedness in us, and beseech GOD to lead us into the way everlasting. But Simon and the other disciples followed Him, and said, "All men seek Thee." They had seen the light, and when it was hid from them they were anxious to see it again. Jesus then went about Galilee preaching and healing sicknesses, and great multitudes followed Him from all parts both of Judea and Galilee, and from beyond Jordan. It was now that our blessed LORD delivered that divine discourse called the Sermon on the Mount, after which, when He came

down from the mountain, He healed a leper, who published His mighty works so widely that our LORD was oppressed by the multitudes who came to hear and to be healed, and He retired into desert places.

When in the city, He was pressed upon by those who wished to satisfy idle curiosity, and who hindered the access of those who had some favour to ask of our LORD. The idly curious would not take the trouble of going any distance to seek the LORD, but they who had any boon to ask would go to Him even in His solitary retirement. If thou shrinkest from the pains and trouble which thy religion give thee, O my soul, be sure thou art not in earnest. JESUS does not always openly shew Himself; thou must seek Him; and apart from the noise, the attractions and the pleasures of the world, thou wilt find Him. He offers at first no inducement to thee to come unto Him; there is no beauty that thou shouldest desire Him; but when thou hast been with Him a while, and hast seen the perfect pattern which He shews of all virtues, when thou hast listened to His divine words, and hast discovered that He alone can heal thy sickness, and take away all thy

infirmities, thou wilt then beseech Him to permit thee to abide with Him.

O gracious Saviour, what fruit do I gather from meditating on Thy most holy life ! Whether thou art in the city or in the desert, whether thou art journeying or stationary, Thou art always working some cure, some wonderful miracle for the benefit of man ! And how humble, how meek, how patient art Thou, O Saviour, in all Thy doings ; how truly and entirely didst Thou become a man, and yet how entirely does Thy divine nature shew itself through all, in the marvellous works Thou wroughtest for the good of men ! What wonders, what mysteries does Thy life unfold ; O teach me to understand it better, by the light of Thy Spirit ; O teach me to love Thee more. Give me higher capacities both of loving and understanding Thy greatness ; then shall I praise Thee less unworthily than I do now, and glorify Thy blessed Name, and shew forth Thy praise not only with my lips but in my life, by dedicating myself to Thy service.

Friday

AFTER FIRST SUNDAY.

NOW THERE IS AT JERUSALEM BY THE SHEEP MARKET A POOL,
WHICH IS CALLED IN THE HEBREW TONGUE BETHESDA,
HAVING FIVE PORCHES.—St. John, v. 2.

GRANT me grace, O LORD, to resist the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil, and with pure heart and mind to follow Thee, the only God, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD.—*Amen.*

When the first year of JESUS, the year of peace and undisturbed preaching was expired, there was a feast of the Jews, and JESUS went up to Jerusalem; this was the second Passover after He began to preach. He passed by the pool of Bethesda, and saw there an impotent person lying, waiting till the angel should move the waters, after which whosoever first stepped in was cured of his infirmity. The poor man

had been a cripple thirty-eight years, and was lying among the crowd of impotent folk who thronged round the pool. Behold our blessed LORD approaching the sick man. He talks with him in His usual meek and quiet way. He asks him, "Wilt thou be made whole?" The man answers, quite unconscious Who was standing by him, and states that he has no man when the water is troubled to put him in; still his faith and his patience remain; there he is, in the hope that some one will take compassion on his infirmity: and he has his reward. Through the crowd of sick our LORD passes; He goes straight up to this man, and when He hears that he is destitute of all means of help, He, the LORD Himself, vouchsafes to be "the man" to help him. He first asks, "Wilt thou be made whole?" for without our consent He will not save us; and then He speaks the word, "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk;" and immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked.

And now, my soul, consider this pool of Bethesda. See a great crowd, all the world lying in trespasses and sins; go thyself, for thou art sick and diseased in soul; watch, for

God's grace comes silently; the angel descends, the waters are moved; O LORD, I have no man to help me; put me into the way of receiving Thy saving grace, or I perish. But thou hast to wait; thou seest others more active, more alive, step down before thee; be not discouraged, O my soul; remember the impotent man; thou hast faith, thou hast a Saviour, and if thou waitest in patience thou wilt receive at last the cure for which thou hast so long and so earnestly sought.

O all ye spiritually sick and diseased, come to the pool of Bethesda, the blood of Christ. Do ye complain of the blindness of your ignorance? here ye shall receive clearness of sight: — of the distemper of passions? here, ease: — of the number of sinful fancies? here they will be cleaned out: — of the impotence of your obedience? here, integrity: — of the deadness of your affections? here, life and vigour. Whatsoever be your infirmity, come to the pool of Bethesda.

Thy Saviour asks thee, "Wilt thou be made whole?" Can there be a doubt, O my soul? Yes, there is a doubt, and that a great doubt. Wilt thou exert thyself when, after thou hast

received the gift of grace, thy Saviour bids thee take up thy bed and walk? All the world would be made whole if it depended merely upon the consent of the tongue. But if thou art cleansed from thy sins, thou must act thenceforth as a clean person; thou must forsake all ways and all persons from which thou mayest again contract pollution; thou must take heed to thyself in all thy ways, and must take up and keep the command over those habits which once stretched thee out as on a bed, and thou must so get the better of them as to walk away with them. Walk! Yes, thou must be ever actively engaged, thou must be never more idle; work, watch, pray, strive with thyself, with thy unseen foes, those powers of darkness who are ever malignantly watching if they can but catch those who are CHRIST's, and so go on during thy pilgrimage in this world; it is but a pilgrimage, in which thou oughtest to be content if thou hast to follow the steps of thy Saviour, Who never enjoyed ease or rest, but was always going about doing good, watching every occasion of following up the good work given Him by His Father to do, and Who now watches thee, my soul, to

see whether thou art fully determined to persevere, after the gracious assistance He has afforded thee.

LORD, I have waited for Thy saving health, and have longed for Thy salvation; come unto me, gracious Saviour; LORD, I have no man but Thee to help me; to Thee do I fly in all my distress, O let Thy saving health come even unto me; have mercy upon me and heal me.

Turn Thee, O LORD, and deliver my soul: O save me for Thy mercy's sake.

For in death no man remembereth Thee: and who will give Thee thanks in the pit?

I am weary of my groaning; every night wash I my bed: and water my couch with my tears.

My beauty is gone for very trouble: and worn away because of all mine enemies.

Away from me, all ye that work vanity: for the LORD hath heard the voice of my weeping.

The LORD hath heard my petition: the LORD will receive my prayer.

Saturday

AFTER FIRST SUNDAY.

AND IT CAME TO PASS IN THOSE DAYS, THAT HE WENT OUT
INTO A MOUNTAIN TO PRAY, AND CONTINUED ALL NIGHT
IN PRAYER TO GOD.—St. Luke vi. 12.

GRANT me grace, O LORD, to resist the
temptations of the world, the flesh, and
the devil, and with pure heart and mind to fol-
low Thee, the only God, through JESUS CHRIST
our LORD. *Amen.*

I read in several places of our blessed LORD
retiring to pray; here He spent the whole
night in prayer. Behold Him, my soul, how
silently and earnestly He prays and humbles
Himself before the Father; He has sought out
a solitary place; He goes there alone. The
faithful Shepherd intercedes for His sheep; for
it is not for Himself that He prays, but for us,
as our Advocate and Mediator with the Father.

He prays also to set us an example. Let me consider that He tells us that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; and He says, "Ask and it shall be given unto you," to inspire us with the confidence of obtaining what we ask for. Oh! blessed assurance that we shall be heard when we approach with boldness the Throne of Grace!

What a privilege is it to see our blessed Saviour thus employed in prayer, for it gives me an example and a spur to do likewise. Let me remember that prayer is our intercourse with God; not as was that of our blessed Saviour, for there was the entire confidence of a well beloved Son with His Father. He was sinless; but that prayer has no doubt gained an admittance for my feeble mutterings whenever I venture to lift up my voice to my heavenly Father. Prayer is the ascent of the mind to God, and a petitioning for such things as we need for our support and duty. Prayer is an act of worship confessing God's power and mercy; it celebrates His attributes, confesses His glory, and adores His person, and gives thanks for His blessings; it is an act of humility and dependance; it is an act of charity

when we pray for others, and an act of humiliation and repentance when we sorrowfully confess our manifold sins and wickednesses. O how happy, how delightful an employment is it to go to God, and tell Him, as a tender Father, all my wants, all my desires, and beg of Him pardon for the present and grace for the future!

But God is in heaven, and I am upon earth; let me then take heed that my prayers be such as are fit to be presented to such a High and Holy One. I may pray for those things for which I may labour; all things that concern my duty, such as glory and grace, assistance of the Spirit, spiritual rewards, heaven and heavenly things. I may pray for those things that I may lawfully hope for; but I must do so provided they conform to God's will and my duty. Let me be importunate in prayer for spiritual blessings. Our Lord in the mountain wearied not; all night long was He in prayer; and can I grudge a little hour to my supplications for myself, for my friends, and above all for God's holy Church?

I say above all, for at this time* I am spe-


* Ember Week.

cially called upon to pray that God's Holy Spirit may guide the bishops and pastors of His Church, that they may lay hands suddenly on no man, but may make choice of fit pastors to serve in the sacred ministry of His Church. Our blessed LORD and Saviour retired to pray on the mountain before He ordained the apostles to go forth and spread the Gospel into all lands. All night did that gracious and loving Saviour pray to His Father. Did His omniscient mind go over the laborious lives and painful deaths of those His chosen servants? I may believe so; and that prayer, that prevailing, night-long supplication, brought down from heaven the gifts of grace which enabled those few poor men to speak and preach with such power and wisdom, and to live such high and holy lives and to die such painful and glorious deaths for the sake of that Gospel which they effectually established in the world, in spite of the strong league formed against it by all the powers of this world.

And in the loneliness of that dark night perhaps our dear LORD saw these days; and He saw the small band of devout men who are on the morrow going to vow solemnly to serve

Him in his sacred ministry. O my Saviour, let me, following humbly the pattern of Thy holy example, and in the silence and solitude of this night, fall low on my knees before Thy footstool, and beseech Thee that a double portion of Thy Spirit may rest upon Thy servant () our bishop, that he may have wisdom to choose fit persons for the ministry; that the words he may speak to them may be winged with the fire of the Spirit, and penetrate into the inmost marrow of those whose vows are to be recorded in heaven. Oh! may his words turn many to righteousness, and strengthen the purposes of all, to gird up their loins and fight valiantly in the LORD's battles.

And for those young ministers and stewards of Thy mysteries, LORD, I have not power or strength to ask enough, or well enough; I can but beseech that they may partake of the benefits of Thy midnight prayer, and that they may be worthy successors to Thy apostles. And, O gracious Saviour, as Thou hast taught us to pray, Thy kingdom come, hear me, according to the tenor of those words: Come, dearest LORD, and reign in my heart, and cause that Thy Gospel may be preached in all the world;



establish Thy kingdom of grace, and hasten Thy kingdom of glory; let that anointing from above descend upon us, whereby we may be anointed kings and priests in a spiritual kingdom and priesthood by a holy chrism.

Second Sunday in Lent.

AND WHEN HE HAD CALLED UNTO HIM HIS TWELVE DISCIPLES, HE GAVE THEM POWER AGAINST UNCLEAN SPIRITS, TO CAST THEM OUT, AND TO HEAL ALL MANNER OF SICKNESS AND ALL MANNER OF DISEASE.—St. Matt. x. 1.

GRANT, O merciful God, that we may in all things grow up in Him Who is our Head, CHRIST JESUS; from Whom the whole body, being compacted and knit together, by every joint subministering to each other, increaseth to the edifying of itself in love, as with Thy increase, O LORD my God.

Behold our LORD, having spent the night in prayer, and having summoned His disciples, surrounded by the twelve; observe with what love and tenderness He speaks to them, and yet what a spirit and majesty there is in His words; they are quick and powerful as a two edged sword, and they inspire the twelve with a burning desire to do His work Whom they

adore. They had before seen Him perform many miracles, and must have been convinced of His divine power. But observe them, and see that according to their different dispositions they are impressed by His words. Some are all full of burning zeal; some are dissolved in tender love; some are quietly and calmly determined; one only is there on whom the seed of those words fell as on a barren soil.

They were all men humbly born, without honour, without learning, that whatever they should do that was great, it was He that should be in them, and should do it. He had among them one that was evil, whom He should use in the accomplishment of His Passion, and who should be an example to His Church, of suffering evil men. He was not chosen among the apostles unwittingly; for that truth is great which cannot be harmed even by having an adversary in one of its own ministers. Our blessed LORD gave His apostles power over unclean spirits. As Himself had cured every sickness and disease, He imparted the same power to His apostles. But there is a wide difference between having and imparting, between giving and receiving. Whatever He

does, He does with the power of a Master ; whatever they do, it is with confession of their own weakness ; as they speak, "In the name of Jesus, rise and walk."

These apostles were to commence the task of evangelizing the world, but as it was impossible that they could finish it, their commission devolved upon their successors, who, by ordaining others, have transmitted their orders even unto this present day, when bishops, priests, and deacons are sent forth to do the work of the ministry. Oh ! how fervently ought I pray to the Lord of the Harvest that He will send forth labourers fit to do the work of that harvest ; and how ought I pray for the people, that they may hear the word and do it—regarding not the persons of their ministers, but the high commission that they bear. It cannot be but that, weak mortals as they are, they will sometimes err ; there may be many unfaithful among them ; but still their commission holds good, for the same Spirit rests upon them, and the means of grace distributed by their hands are as powerful as they were in the hands of the apostles.

They have power over the wicked and unclean

spirits, and every spiritual sickness and disease may be healed by them. Let me remember this, and whenever I am in need, let me go to the appointed minister and request his assistance; and let me recollect the commission of the priest to remit and retain sins when he pronounces the absolution. O may such grace be never held out to me in vain, but let me by penitence for my sins, and sincere intentions of amendment, fit and prepare myself to receive those gracious offers of pardon which are delivered by the priest in the name of ALMIGHTY God.

Consider, my soul, how utterly inefficient, to poor mortals' eyes, were the twelve poor men who were ordained by our blessed LORD to preach the Gospel in all the world; and yet, before their work was done, consider that from east to west that Gospel *was* preached, their sound had gone out into all lands, and their words unto the ends of the world.

In looking round upon the masses of heathens in these days, and upon the crowds, alas! of even our own people, to whom, in this favoured land, the glad tidings of the Gospel have hardly reached; the oppressing feeling that the few

men who are called to the ministry are utterly inadequate to perform their task will come over thee; but tarry thou the LORD's leisure, forward His work by doing thy own duty, and by prayer daily that His ministers may be endued with much strength and courage, with the spirit of wisdom and knowledge, and that they may have a single eye to their Master's glory. Pray at such seasons as this, that God will put it into the hearts of the bishops and pastors of His flock to choose fit and proper persons to be His ministers, and put thou thy trust in the LORD. The grain of mustard seed will in time be a goodly tree; the stone hewn without hands will in time become a mountain; and then all, prophets, martyrs, the pastor and his flock, the faithful and the unfaithful, will be again gathered round the LORD, not as a lowly Man, but as a righteous Judge; not to ordain, but to dispense the rewards for labour spent in His vineyard.

Monday

AFTER SECOND SUNDAY.

AND, BEHOLD, A WOMAN IN THE CITY, WHICH WAS A SINNER, WHEN SHE KNEW THAT JESUS SAT AT MEAT IN THE PHARISEE'S HOUSE, BROUGHT AN ALABASTER BOX OF OINTMENT, AND STOOD AT HIS FEET BEHIND HIM WEEPING, AND BEGAN TO WASH HIS FEET WITH TEARS, AND DID WIPE THEM WITH THE HAIRS OF HER HEAD, AND KISSED HIS FEET, AND ANOINTED THEM WITH THE OINTMENT. — St. Luke, vii. 37, 38.

GIVE me, O LORD, the assistance of Thy Holy Spirit, to help me in the performance of my duty; and give me such comforts and helps as Thou seest most fit, to encourage my hopes, alleviate my distresses, and refresh my spirits in my endeavours after true purity and holiness.

When our LORD had ordained His apostles, He delivered unto them another divine discourse as they stood in the plain. He then

returned to Capernaum, where He healed the Centurion's servant, and passed to the city called Nain, at the entrance of whose gates He raised the widow's son to life. He then received John's disciples, who came to ask Him many questions, and sent them away, having appealed to His many marvellous works as an answer to their queries. He then taught the multitudes; He spoke to them of John, of the austerity of his life, and the holiness of his person, the greatness of his function, and the divinity of his commission. He added many words as to the perverseness of that generation, who would not receive John, who came neither eating nor drinking, (that by his austerity and mortified deportment he might engage the affections of the people;) neither would they receive JESUS, Who came both eating and drinking, (that by a moderate and affable life, suited to the common life of all men, He might gain their love.) They objected against everything; and though they accepted the mighty works, yet did they not the more believe in Him. With our blessed LORD let me thank our heavenly Father that these deep mysteries are hid from the wise and prudent, and are revealed

unto babes ; that is, to those who receive the blessed truths of the Gospel with a trusting, child-like spirit. O blessed Saviour, I hear Thy gracious invitation to me ; I am grieved and weary with the burden of my sins ; let me approach Thee with penitence and faith ; put upon me the light yoke of Thy holy discipline, and impose upon me the easy burden of attention to Thy precepts and commands ; then shall I find what I now often most grievously want — even rest to my soul.

When our LORD had finished this discourse, He went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees, and did eat ; and there came to Him a woman, one who had led an intemperate and evil life. She came not as the multitudes, to stare at a person who was creating a talk and a sensation in the place ; she came not as the centurion, or the ruler of the synagogue, for cure of her sickness, or of that of child, servant, or friend ; she came in remorse and deep penitence for her sins, to lay her burden at the feet of her Saviour, to present them with a broken heart and weeping eyes, and to show her love and value for her Saviour, by pouring upon Him the costliest ointment.

Behold, O my soul, the weeping, trembling woman. Hast thou a sin which weighs heavily on thy conscience? Dost thou not remember on many occasions having sinned against thy LORD? Thou mayest imagine thyself standing before thy Saviour, He Who can alone pity thee and feel for thee, and intercede for thee and pardon thee. Canst thou bear the countenance which beams upon thee in all the perfect purity of holy humanity? Canst thou stand unabashed before thy God? No; weeping and trembling, thou must cast thyself low on the ground, and wash with thy tears His feet, Who is ever active in pitying and pardoning those who come in penitence and faith. But how can I anoint my LORD's feet? I have no costly ointment, no rich perfumes; but thou must consider, O my soul, that those very expensive luxuries which the woman used to lavish upon her own person, she now bestowed upon her LORD. Thou mayest deny thyself every luxury; but chiefly thou mayest deny thyself in thy cherished bosom sin — that secret indulgence which is very precious to thee; it will cost thee much to forego it; take it to thy Saviour, and while thou art weeping and la-

menting thy sins, cast it before Him; break the box, pour out all, reserve none for thyself, and so anoint thy LORD's feet. LORD, receive me; cast me not away from Thy presence; accept my love offering, a broken and a contrite heart. I have sinned, frequently, grievously sinned against Thee, by trusting to vanity, and being occupied in deceit with them that work wickedness; but, O LORD, I turn unto Thee, and I say, Take away my sin and receive me graciously. O forgive me my many and grievous transgressions, and accept this my sacrifice of love and penitence; for I love Thee, my LORD and Saviour; Thou hast forgiven me much; I love Thee, though only feebly and imperfectly. O LORD, increase in me my sense of guilt; make my conscience more tender, and then raise my powers of loving Thee as I know Thou oughtest to be loved, with united fervour, purity, and intensity.

Tuesday

AFTER SECOND SUNDAY.

**AND THE DISCIPLES CAME, AND SAID UNTO HIM, WHY
SPEAKEST THOU UNTO THEM IN PARABLES!—**

St. Matt. xiii. 10.

GIVE me, O LORD, the assistance of Thy Holy Spirit, to help me in the performance of my duty; and give me such comforts and helps as Thou seest most fit, to encourage my hopes, alleviate my distresses, and refresh my spirits in my endeavours after true purity and holiness.

When our LORD had been entertained in the chief Pharisee's house at Nain, He left that city and went through every city and village, teaching and preaching, in company with His disciples, and healing all sorts of infirmities and diseases; and He returned to Capernaum. There the multitudes pressed upon Him, so

that He had not time so much as to eat. He cast an unclean devil out of a man, which caused the unbelieving to say, that through Beelzebub He had cast out devils; and while He was sitting in the house talking to the people, one came and said, "Behold, Thy mother and Thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with Thee."


Behold the manner in which our LORD rebukes their coming to Him at an improper time, interrupting His discourse to the people. I must bear in mind not only the unbecoming conduct of His brethren, but also I must recollect Who He was; not a mere man, but the only begotten Son of God. He reproved them, not with the intent of perplexing them, but to deliver them from the tyranny of the passion of jealousy which possessed them, and to lead them by little and little to right notions about Himself; and also to convince His mother that He was not her Son only, but also her LORD. "He that doeth the will of My Father, the same is My brother and My sister and mother." O what a blessed announcement is this! How many have desired to be like that blessed Virgin! Here is the way pointed out, and it

is granted not to women only, but to men also, to be of this exalted rank. What rewards are held out to simple obedience! O my soul, if to do thy Father's will draws thee so near to thy precious Saviour, what folly and blindness is it not to endeavour to walk more closely to the commandments of thy God! Here is the end of all thy strivings, to be brought near to CHRIST, even as a brother or sister. O resolve to study what that will is, and then employ every energy of thy nature to do it.

Our LORD then went out of the house, and sat by the sea side, that is, by the lake Genesaret; the people, as usual, thronged about Him, so that He went into a small boat, and from thence taught the people. Here He delivered to them the parable of the sower; and when He had finished His discourse, the disciples came and asked Him, Why speakest Thou to them in parables? I ought here to admire the disciples, who, longing as they did to learn, knew when they ought to ask. "They came to Him privately;" this ought His mother and brethren to have done, and not have called Him out, and made a display. I ought also to admire their kindly thought for others, in ask-

ing why He spoke to "them" in parables. What says our LORD? "Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given." This implies that the people were the authors of their own evils. The gift of knowledge is not given causelessly or at random; it is a gift and a grace from above. It does not follow that, being a gift, free will is taken away, as is evident from what follows: He signifies that the beginning comes from ourselves; "for whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundantly; but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have." Here let me admire the justice of God's laws; His ways are indeed equal; giving much when much has been striven for, and taking away from carelessness even what it seemed to possess at first.

O my soul, what carefulness ought these words to beget in thee! How ought it to quicken thy zeal and thy love, and how earnest oughtest thou to be to gain such a faith as shall enable thee truly to exert thyself to know CHRIST! The people to whom thy LORD



spoke in parables had seen the mighty works which He wrought; they heard the words as they proceeded from His lips; they saw Him Who was fairer than the children of men, not from beauty of person, but from the rays of divine light which illuminated His countenance; and yet they believed not. Even so to thee, God has shewn marvellous great kindness; He has placed thee in the way of salvation; but He leaves thee to work thy way thyself, and if thou dost not strive to gain more and more light, He will envelope thee in darkness; all thou seest will be an unfathomable mystery; and thou wilt be sitting in the midst of glorious light with shut eyes, not being able to discern the things belonging to the Spirit. Keep me, O blessed Saviour, from this state of blindness; open my eyes that they may see the wondrous things of Thy law; make me active and earnest in studying Thy holy ways, and then make all plain to me; speak no more in parables, and shew me the mysteries of Thy heavenly kingdom. O send out Thy light and truth, that they may lead me and bring me to Thy holy hill and to Thy

dwelling, and that I may go unto the altar of God, even unto the God of my joy and gladness; and upon the harp will I give thanks unto Thee, O God, my God.

Wednesday

AFTER SECOND SUNDAY.

IS NOT THIS THE CARPENTER'S SON? IS NOT HIS MOTHER CALLED MARY? AND HIS BRETHREN, JAMES, AND JOSEPH, AND SIMON, AND JUDAS? AND HIS SISTERS, ARE THEY NOT ALL WITH US? WHENCE THEN HATH THIS MAN ALL THESE THINGS. — St. Matt. xiii. 55, 56.

GIVE me, O LORD, the assistance of Thy Holy Spirit, to help me in the performance of my duty; and give me such comforts and helps as Thou seest most fit, to encourage my hopes, alleviate my distresses, and refresh my spirits in my endeavours after purity and holiness.

After our LORD had delivered His parable of the sower, and many other parables of which He privately gave the interpretation to His disciples, He departed. Let me go with Him in spirit, and see Him accosted, first by a certain scribe, whose offer of following Him He

seemed to discourage, by shewing him the life of privation which He led; and then by one of His disciples, who still clung to earthly ties, begging to be allowed to bury his father; but our LORD bade him disregard all, and follow Him. See our blessed LORD now entering into a ship; He embarked, and a great tempest arose: hear Him say, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith! as if He said, I am with you, ye have seen the many wonderful things that I have done, wherefore do ye not cling to Me? And He rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. He then went into the country of the Gadarenes, where He met two possessed with devils, and He commanded the unclean spirits to go into a herd of swine, which ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and were choked in the waves. Then came out the whole city to meet JESUS, and they besought Him that He would depart out of their coasts. Again He crossed over the sea of Galilee and came to Capernaum, where He healed the ruler's daughter and the infirm woman. He now takes His departure, and healing two blind men on the road, came into His own city, Nazareth.

Wednesday after Second Sunday. 77


O blessed Saviour, how dost Thou weary Thyself in healing the infirmities of the human race! Thou hast no intermission, no rest; the people throng about Thee, and Thou speakest words such as never man spake; all the sick that are brought unto Thee Thou healest; Thou raisest the dead to life; Thou stillest the raging of the sea; even the devils are subject to Thee! Thou art indeed the CHRIST, the only begotten Son of God; even the devils confessed this, and acknowledged Thy almighty power. I humbly adore Thy infinite power and majesty, beseeching Thee that the contemplation of Thy divine mercies may raise my faith, and lead me to a more exalted idea and more intimate knowledge of the mysteries of Thy kingdom. I see my danger, O LORD; it is that under which those unbelieving Jews laboured, and under which they fell. Even Thy own brethren, LORD, believe not on Thee, and those of Thine own city could not bring themselves to believe in One Whom they had seen working at a trade, and Whose family, according to the flesh, they daily saw.

If I, with these Nazarenes, look upon JESUS with the eyes of flesh, and regard His doings

as I would the daily acts of another man, I shall lose sight of His divine nature, and begin to ask the questions and suggest the doubts which I here read of as put by His fellow citizens. They refer to His wisdom — to His mighty works. Wonderful folly of the Nazarenes! they wonder whence Wisdom itself has wisdom, whence Power has mighty works! But the source of their error is at hand; because they regard Him as the son of a carpenter, they thought of Him only as a man. O wonderful, mysterious working of God! This error is our salvation, to compass which, God became man; but the mighty works — were they the works of a man? No; God alone can raise the dead, and forgive sins, and restore sight to the blind, and still the stormy wind and tempest. He was also God; therefore, because they would not discern in Him God, all-mighty, all-merciful, they incurred the penalty which our blessed LORD imposed; for He did not many mighty works because of their unbelief; some mighty works He did, to enable them to believe, if they had the will; many He did not, lest they should thereby heap to themselves greater damnation.

Wednesday after Second Sunday. 79

And, now, what shall I say to myself? Behold, thou hast seen thy Saviour's miracles, thou hast heard His words; thou knowest that God has visited His people; that visit was that thou, with all others that believe in Him, might be saved. Wilt thou believe? Dost thou see in that meek and lowly Man thy God? Art thou penetrated with gratitude for all the toils and labours, the sorrows and sufferings, He underwent? Be not satisfied with giving a bare assent to these propositions. Thou mayest be convinced in thy mind, but thy spirit may not be imbued with the great facts which thou art constantly having put before thee. Thou must pray unto Him to give thee this spirit; let the consciousness of thy Saviour's mighty works be present with thee; guard against reading the gospels as a mere history; make it a devotion; and if thou canst not discern thy Lord in what thou readest, lay the book aside, and resume it not until thou hast, by fervent prayer, sought a right spirit to enter into the holy narrative. If, by thus doing, thou enlivenest thy faith, exaltest thy hope, confirmest thy charity, thy Saviour will do great things for thee; He will open thine eyes — He will lift up thy soul.



Oh! may He, in His infinite mercy, create a new heart and a right spirit within thee, and lead thee gently through this life, and through the valley of the shadow of death, and bring thee unto His eternal kingdom; where thou shalt see Him as He is—as He purchased such great things for thee—and where thou shalt be like unto Him.

Thursday

AFTER SECOND SUNDAY.

BUT STRAIGHTWAY JESUS SPAKE UNTO THEM, SAYING,
BE OF GOOD CHEER ; IT IS I ; BE NOT AFRAID —
St. Matt. xiv. 27.

GIVE me, O LORD, the assistance of Thy Holy Spirit to help me in the performance of my duty ; and give me such comforts and helps as Thou seest most fit, to encourage my hopes, alleviate my distresses, and refresh my spirits in my endeavours after true purity and holiness.

JESUS departed from Nazareth, and went about the cities and villages of Galilee, and then returned to Capernaum. There He ceased not to teach and to preach, until His fame reached the ears of Herod, who, with apprehensions derived from guilt, thought that it was John the Baptist who was risen from

the dead, and that these mighty works were demonstrations of his power, increased by the superadditions of immortality and diviner influences.

The apostles had buried the body of John, and they then told Jesus what they had done. He, therefore, retired into a desert place by ship; but even there He could not be free from the multitudes, for they followed Him, and He was moved with compassion toward them, for they were as sheep not having a shepherd; and He taught them and healed their sick. Now, when the day was far spent, the disciples would have sent them away into the surrounding villages, to get themselves bread; but our compassionate LORD would not send them away empty, but worked a miracle in their behalf, by infinitely extending their small stock of provisions, until it not only came up to the wants of the multitude, but even overpassed them, for twelve baskets of the fragments were gathered up. The eyes of all wait upon Thee, O LORD! Thou fillest all things living with plenteousness.

The multitude departed, and straightway Jesus compelled the disciples to get into a

ship. They did so unwillingly, for they liked not to leave the Master they so dearly loved, in the darkness of night, among strangers, and in a wild place, moreover, without the means of joining them. O how natural, to be unwilling to part from their Saviour! In His presence there is fulness of joy; and whither could they go, for He, their Master, had the words of eternal life.

The commands and decrees of my God may sometimes appear harsh to me; they may seem to affect most grievously my present comforts, my future happiness; but His decrees I know by faith, yea, and by experience also, are always gracious, and he never afflicts but for my profit; the more difficulty in the charge, the more praise in obedience. The disciples murmured not, but they went; and He, their Saviour and mine, retires to pray; He went up into the mountain. O my Saviour, how blessed am I in Thy example. Thou wentest aside, for in retirement do prayers more easily ascend to God's throne on high. Thou prayedst, Thou, the God of all power, prayedst, that I might gain strength and courage to ask for that which Thou never couldst have lacked. He

is on the mount, they are on the seas. Those all-seeing eyes can at once pierce into the highest heavens and down to the profoundest deep, and He could see the danger in which the disciples were involved. O LORD, we are cast amid the stormy sea of this world, and Thou canst see us as we buffet with its billows; from the height of heaven Thou canst regard the children of men; and if Thou findest that we struggle with hearts full of faith to Thee, Thou wilt descend and help us. For behold, when the night is spent as far as to the fourth watch, He descended from the mountain, and came unto them walking on the waters. And thou, my soul, art now in full career of this boisterous sea, the winds bluster, the billows swell around thee — as yet it is but midnight; O if thou canst but endure to the fourth watch! thy LORD will then come and rescue thee. O faint not under thy sorrows, but wear out thy three watches with undaunted patience and holy resolution.

Behold the GOD of elements walking on the waters. He Who rides upon the cherubim and flies through the air can also walk upon the waters. He approaches the ship; they, terri-

and affrighted, thought they saw a spirit. And why are they thus troubled? Did they not know that, though unseen, spirits are ever surrounding them? Visibility adds nothing to the reality, and could their eyes have been opened they would have seen a greater host both with them than against them, and the God of spirits especially protecting them. But their heart was young, and their minds distracted by their fears. But hear the words uttered by our Lord; words of infinite relief and comfort to them; words which have comforted many a distracted soul while tossing about on the waves of affliction — “It is I, be not afraid.” It is precious enough to us in the worst of our afflictions to be assured of CHRIST’s presence with us. Say but “It is I,” O Saviour, and let evils be their worst, Thou needest say no more. Thy voice was evidence enough; so well were Thy disciples acquainted with the tongue of fire that their Master that “It is I” was as much as an hundred names. Thou art the Good Shepherd, we are not of Thy flock if we know Thee not by Thy voice from a thousand. Even now is one is a great word, “It is I.” The same tongue that said to Moses “I AM hath sent

thee," saith now to the disciples "It is I;"
your LORD and Master; I the commander
winds and waters; I the sovereign LORD
heaven and earth; I the God of spirits.
sweet and seasonable word of a gracious S
viour, able to calm all tempests, able to rev
all hearts! Say but "It is I" to my soul, a
in spite of hell I am safe.

Friday

AFTER SECOND SUNDAY.

LORD, SAVE ME. — St. Matt. xiv. 30.

GIVE me, O LORD, the assistance of Thy Holy Spirit, to help me in the performance of my duty; and give me such comforts and helps as Thou seest most fit, to encourage my hopes, alleviate my distresses, and refresh my spirits in my endeavours after true purity and holiness.

When the disciples were assured Who it was that approached them in so marvellous a manner, Peter, ever bold, zealous, and full of ardent faith, longing to get near his Master, and fully assured of His power to assist him, asked to be allowed to "come unto Him on the water," and our LORD bade him "come;" Peter, therefore, without a moment's hesitation, gets out of the ship and begins to walk towards his

blessed Master ; but the wind is boisterous, the sea rough, and Peter's courage forsakes him ; he begins to sink, and calls out to JESUS, "LORD, save me."

Peter, standing in the little ship, desires to be with JESUS ; but that desire takes him not, he must use an exertion. To sit still and wish to gain the kingdom of heaven is not the way to obtain it ; no, I must "work" out my salvation ; the kingdom of heaven is gained by the violent, "who take it by force," that is, by a series of active operations, having its attainment as their end and object. Peter wished to be with JESUS, but, joined to the prayer uttered, he, upon hearing the invitation "Come," began to exert himself, and got out of the ship. Behold Peter walking on the waters, upheld by two hands — the hand of CHRIST's power, the hand of his own faith. Peter's faith failed him, for he loosed his hold of CHRIST, and began directly to sink. Peter, in getting out of the boat, must have known that he was going to do what could be effected only by miracle ; but he had forgotten the winds and the waves. I am often in a similar position. I walk on the troubled sea of life ; those evils I can foresee

and am prepared for, have no power over me ; I remain firm, and perhaps have some self-satisfaction in my faith and courage ; but a gale overtakes me, and I am suddenly surrounded by unexpected dangers and difficulties ; I begin to sink ; " LORD, save me."

O my Saviour, let my haste to Thee be zealous but not improvident ; ere I set my foot out of the ship, let me foresee the tempest ; when I have looked the worst steadily in the face, I shall neither go wrong nor complain. Peter cried out to his LORD, for Him it was he had offended in mistrusting ; it was to CHRIST that he cried for deliverance ; He alone could hear ; He alone could save. When I daily, yea, hourly commit some offence or trespass against my LORD, whither do I fly for help ? Does my faith instantly see the Saviour before me ? With Him alone is the power of forgiveness. O let me have the faith always to fly to my Saviour for pardon ; let me rely implicitly on His power ; for His mercy, when sought faithfully, is found. "Immediately Jesus stretched forth His hand and caught him." That hand has often been stretched out to save many that never asked it ; it was never asked and refused.

But if at the same time that the hand is outstretched, a rebuke is administered, how ought I to prize that gentle chastisement, containing, as it surely does, assurances of still greater mercy! "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"

When Peter first stepped upon the water, I thought his faith was great; but his next move shook all that faith. What a warning to me is there here! One moment full of faith, another moment all distrust, and destruction consequent thereupon stares me in the face! While in this life, I shall always have a struggle against want of firmness and consistency of faith; O may I cultivate that steady, calm courage given by a confidence that my Saviour is ever near me, with outstretched arms ready to uphold me when I cry, "LORD, save me." And when the rebuking voice is heard, as in Peter's case, with a loving correction, let me exclaim, Correct me, O LORD, but let not Thy precious balms break my head; I am very weak, but Thy loving correction shall make me great.

Save me, O God, for the waters are come in, even unto my soul.

I stick fast in the deep mire where no ground

s; I am come into deep waters so that the floods run over me.

I am weary of my crying, my throat is dry; my sight faileth me for waiting so long upon God.

Hear me, O God, in the multitude of Thy mercies, even in the truth of Thy salvation.

Take me out of the mire that I sink not: O let me be delivered from them that hate me, and out of the deep waters.

Hear me, O LORD, for Thy loving kindness is comfortable. Turn Thee unto me according to the multitude of Thy mercies.

And hide not Thy face from Thy servant, for I am in trouble; O haste Thou and hear me.

Saturday

AFTER SECOND SUNDAY.

AND SHE SAID, TRUTH, LORD : YET THE DOGS EAT OF
THE CRUMBS WHICH FALL FROM THEIR MASTER'S
TABLE. — St. Matt. xv. 27.

GIVE me, O LORD, the assistance of Thy Holy Spirit, to help me in the performance of my duty ; and give me such comforts and helps as Thou seest most fit, to encourage my hopes, alleviate my distresses, and refresh my spirits in my endeavours after true purity and holiness.

When our blessed LORD landed from the tempestuous voyage, He was surrounded by the inhabitants of the country, who brought their sick and diseased to be healed by Him ; and as many as did but touch the hem of His garment were made perfectly whole. There came to Him certain Scribes and Pharisees, and began

Saturday after Second Sunday. 93

uting with Him about certain rites, derived from Him, not by divine sanction, but by the ordinances of men. He denounces woes against them for the want of reality in their religion ;

He afterwards showed to the multitude and to the disciples, the use of outward observances ; for the actions are only indexes by which we see the hidden man of the heart ; external washings will not cleanse the stains of the soul, neither does external pollution denote internal sin. All real pollution is from within, from the corruption of the heart, and impure thoughts, and unholy purposes ; and charity is the best purifier in the world.

Hence Jesus departed, and went into the streets of Tyre and Sidon, and entered into a house, so that he might not be seen and known. A mother's love finds Him out. A woman of Canaan came, and cried out to Him, " Have mercy on me, O LORD, Thou Son of David ; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil."

From the vehemence of her desire, the warmth of her affection ; she confesses Jesus to be the Messiah, the Son of David ; yet the awe of approaching so great a person does not restrain her, she cries out, and in that cry makes a

confession of her faith, and evidences the strength of her desire. Oh, how blessed is the faith! of this Syrophenician! the greatest disciple, the most constant follower, has no higher. She alone, of the millions in Tyre and Sidon, comes to JESUS; she alone cries, LORD, have mercy on me! Why does she say "me?" Perhaps her daughter lies senseless, and cannot appreciate the benefit; but she feels both that sorrow and her own, and she knows Who can save her; yea, more easily could she forget her own child than He His people. O blessed affliction that brings me to CHRIST; O blessed faith that leads me to cry unto Him; and thrice blessed He, my only, my dearest Saviour, Who will hear and will answer when I say, LORD, have mercy on me! But He answers her not. The disciples come and beseech Him to send her away; and then He speaks, but not words of encouragement; — "I am not sent, but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel!" What means this, O my Saviour? Is Thy hand shortened? Oh, no; Thou wouldest bring out the great faith of this Canaanite still further, to shew that it is the hidden man of the heart which stamps the true Israelite. Oh, may I be

found among the remnant of those when Thou comest to judge the world !

Behold, the woman comes still nearer ; she is prostrate ; she worships Him to Whom before she cried, " LORD, help me ! " Canst thou see that suppliant figure, bowed at its Saviour's feet, and hear those words of heart-sorrow, without being moved ? Hast thou ever so supplicated thy Saviour ? Thou hast had many a sorrow ; thou hast carried many a heart-load of grief to thy Saviour's feet ; but hast thou so persevered, when He was silent ? Thou hast been heard, but not answered : has thy faith kept alive ? Answer, O my soul ; but say truly that thy faith never carried thee to the true point. LORD, help me ; Thou knowest all ; I need say no more ; LORD, help me !

Again did our LORD seem to repel the woman ; but she answers with great humility, acknowledging herself to be no better than the dogs, and claiming the privilege of dogs who eat the crumbs under the table. O precious faith, acceptable perseverance ; her suit is granted : " Be unto thee even as thou wilt. " She came as a dog ; she went away a child. Thus does our dear LORD answer the prayer of faith offered

up with sincere humility. O LORD, the crumbs under Thy table are all that I can hope for; when I look up to Thy great majesty and glory, I wonder that Thou wilt do this for me; yet Thou doest still more, Thou givest me such feasts of Thy divine bounty, that I can never admire enough; but should this be ever withdrawn, and should I be obliged to live in dearth and misery, let me imitate the Canaanite, and, falling down before my LORD, request, in faith and in humility, to be allowed to gather up the crumbs that fall from His table.



Third Sunday in Lent.

AND HE SIGHED DEEPLY IN HIS SPIRIT, AND SAITH, WHY
DOTH THIS GENERATION SEEK AFTER A SIGN!—

St. Mark, viii. 12.

O HOLY Spirit of Grace, be with me, I beseech Thee, in my meditations, that I may profitably follow the steps of my blessed Saviour, to the improvement of my growth in holiness, and to the extirpation of my many sins, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD.

Our LORD departed from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon and came to the coast of the sea of Galilee. There He abode in a mountainous place, and they brought unto Him a deaf and dumb man, whose infirmity He cured. The multitude which then surrounded Him being very great, our blessed LORD again supplied their necessities by a miracle, and when they had eaten, He sent them away.

Now see Him again on board a small ship

or boat ; He stays not long in one place, but is constantly moving, scattering miracles and gifts wherever He is, that all the people might have full evidence Who it was thus moving about among them. When He was again on shore, Pharisees and Sadducees came unto Him demanding from Him a sign from heaven ; but JESUS rejected their impertinent and captious demand, knowing that they did it from bad motives, and with disaffection. He reproved them that they discerned the face of the sky, or the prognostics of fair or foul weather, but could not see the signs of the times, nor of the Son of Man, Who was then standing before them. O foolish and perverse generation ! how wonderful that they could not see in the meek and lowly Man, Him Who was described by a prophet of their own, as One having no form or comeliness, and no beauty that they should desire Him ; He was indeed esteemed as “a worm and no man, a very scorn of men.” And yet, why was this ? for they came to Him just as He had miraculously dispensed food to upwards of four thousand persons. They knew that He had unstopped the ears of the deaf, and caused the tongue of the dumb to be un-

loosed ; He had cast out devils ; He had cured all manner of sickness and disease ; He had raised the dead ; and yet these Pharisees and Sadducees pretended not to have evidence enough, but demanded a sign.

O gracious Saviour, well mayest Thou sigh at such unbelief ; it already weighs upon Thy righteous soul, a foretaste of Thy final agony, and causes Thee to groan in spirit ! He looks into their thoughts as God, and knows that even a sign from heaven would not take away their unbelief, and He therefore would give no sign ; but He promises a sign, even the sign of the prophet Jonah. And here our gracious Lord prophesies, for what was the sign of Jonah but His own descent into hell, and resurrection on the third day ? They then had a fearful sign, but they believed none the more, for they even bribed the people to tell a lie rather than allow the belief that He had risen from the dead.

He left them ; He neither wastes words nor miracles upon the obstinate, hard hearted Pharisees, who set their faces as a flint against Him, and would not believe, heaping to themselves surer damnation.

“An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign.” And so it is with this generation; all are curious, ever ready to hear and to marvel; ever anxious for fresh subjects for excitement, and for new investigations into mysterious and hidden things. We enquire into the reasons of things, and we say, If so and so can be proved, I am ready to believe. O blind and foolish! Is not CHRIST here among us? Does He not give us daily, yea hourly evidence of His presence? Is not His Church a sure and abiding token that here He is, if not visibly, yet actually and spiritually? O seek no sign, but open thy soul to Him; let Him come unto thee and abide with thee, and when thou feelest the sweet influence of His grace, thou wilt seek no other sign, thou wilt desire no further proof, all will flow into thee, and thy eyes will be open on a marvellous field of miracles, love, and mercy, continually spread before thee. But if on the other hand, thou settest thy face against believing all His marvellous works, and art ever enquiring but never ready to learn, no sign will be granted thee; the ground beneath thy feet will be stone, and the heavens above thee brass; and thy Saviour will leave

thee ; but a sign will come—the sign of the Son of Man in the heavens ! Then wilt thou believe by force ; there will be no pleasure then or joy in believing ; thou wilt see in thy offended God an inexorable Judge, Who will reward thee according to thy deserts.

O my sweet LORD and Saviour, let me follow Thee, humbly watching Thy gracious acts, and so storing up in my mind such evidences of Thy power and love, that my faith may never waver nor give way ; let me follow Thee in all the passages of Thy most holy life, endeavouring to imitate Thy infinite perfections ; and then gracious LORD, do Thou condescend to come to me, thy poor, unworthy, erring servant ; give me such spiritual discernment as may show me the peculiar errors of the age in which I live, enabling me to see the disparity between Thy laws and the present customs and manners of men ; and for the rest, LORD, keep me by Thee, and let me not engage in disputes or reasoning, but simply and earnestly endeavour to do Thy will in all things, O gracious Master, Saviour, Redeemer, JESUS CHRIST !

Monday

AFTER THIRD SUNDAY.

AND SIMON PETER ANSWERED AND SAID, THOU ART THE
CHRIST, THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD. —
St. Matt. xvi. 16.

O HOLY Spirit of Grace, be with me, I beseech Thee, in my meditations, that I may profitably follow the steps of my blessed Saviour, to the improvement of my growth in holiness, and to the extirpation of my many sins, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD.

Passing again over the lake, our LORD cautioned His disciples to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod, because they found that they had brought no bread; by this He warned them against the hypocrisy of the one and the heresy of the other; for Herod's leaven was the pretence that he was the Messiah, which the sect of the He-

rodians did earnestly promote. Then they came to Bethsaida, where He cured a blind man; and thence they departed into the coasts of Casarea Philippi, for He wished to get His disciples out of the teaching of the Pharisees, as He was going to ask them some important questions, and to lay the foundations of His Gospel. He began by asking them, Whom men thought that He was; and they told Him that some said He was Elias, or John the Baptist; others, Jeremias; but all thought Him one of the prophets. Then He comes close to the point, and begins with "But," as if He would have said, Ye have now followed Me a long time, and have seen the mighty works that I have done: you have seen greater miracles than the multitude; therefore you have had more opportunity of forming an opinion, Whom say ye that I am? Simon Peter answers this momentous question with—"Thou art the CHRIST, the SON of the living God;" and this declaration was answered by a blessing, and a declaration that such a knowledge could only come from the inspiration of God. I must remember that the evidences which had convinced Peter had left the Jews still in a

state of unbelief. I may, therefore, gather that the belief in God's mysteries is not the result of knowledge, nor even of ocular demonstration, but is a gift of the Spirit, granted in greater or less degree, according to the capability of the person receiving it; and as Peter alone is mentioned as confessing the belief, so is the blessing conveyed to him alone, he alone having attained the height of faith worthy of such a reward. Now let me consider in what this declaration consists. "Thou art the CHRIST," the Anointed, set apart by God for the most sacred office, of which all the employments under the law were but types and shadows. There was a general expectation among the Jews that such a CHRIST was to come. I have heard the woman of Samaria say to our LORD, "I know that Messiah cometh;" and I have also heard many of the people say, "Of a truth, this is the Prophet; this is the CHRIST." In all the Scriptures of the Old Testament, there run through constant prophecies, types, allusions, and descriptions of the Messiah. Abraham had the promise—"In Isaac shall thy seed be called;" which St. Paul interprets, when he says, "He saith not unto seeds, as of

many, but as of one, and to thy seed, which is CHRIST." Jacob, in dying, declared that "Shiloh would come;" Balaam spoke of the "Star of Jacob." Then come the prophecies of the "Root of Jesse," the Lion of the tribe of Judah, "the Righteous Branch;" and when this long expected, long wished for CHRIST did come, what was the result? Men saw His mighty works, and, in many instances, they were forced into the confession that He was the CHRIST and the Prophet that was to come. They could not help seeing that He carried about Him the signs which they had been led to expect to recognize in their Messias. They saw in Him a man "without form or comeliness," with no beauty. He had the form of a servant; and they rejected and despised Him; they completed the number of signs by which He was to be discovered by man upon earth, by rejecting Him and His doctrines, by hating and reviling Him, by persecuting, and finally by putting Him to death. I will not stop to wonder at the blindness of these wretched men; but I will pass to the blessedness of those who believe and confess, and live up to the belief that He, Who was thus living the life of ordinary men upon

earth, having like feelings, passions, emotions, with other men—Who only exceeded other men in the amount of privations He endured, and of persecution He suffered, and in the hatred He submitted to—Who was only pre-eminent in suffering, and more cruelly murdered than others—was the only begotten Son of God, the CHRIST sent to preach the gospel to the poor, to heal the broken hearted, to be agonized with the weight of our transgressions, and, as our great High Priest, to offer Himself as the full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice for our sins. He is the SON of the living God. He is now seated at the right hand of the FATHER, carrying on His priestly office, continually interceding for us: and He will carry those to reign with Him in glory, who practically act upon their belief that He is the CHRIST, the SON of the living God.

O blessed faith! for, looking upon myself, what should I, wretched sinner, be without CHRIST, Whose blood has been poured out to the last drop to wipe away my guilt stains? How could I stand before the terrible Judgment seat, if I did not know that the eternal Son ever liketh to make intercession for me, and

that He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities ; for He was in all points tempted as we are, only without sin, and therefore He, the Sinless, vouchsafes to interpose His purity between me and the wrath of the justly offended majesty of the living God. O CHRIST, my God, I thank Thee for Thy great mercy to me ; I thank Thee that thou hast revealed Thyself to me, that I am called a Christian after Thy Name. O may I never disgrace this sacred profession, but grant me to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of Thee, until Thou shalt see fit to receive me from this state of trial to the place Thou hast prepared for Thy faithful ones.

Tuesday

AFTER THIRD SUNDAY.

FROM THAT TIME FORTH BEGAN JESUS TO SHEW UNTO HIS DISCIPLES, HOW THAT HE MUST GO UNTO JERUSALEM, AND SUFFER MANY THINGS OF THE ELDERS AND CHIEF PRIESTS AND SCRIBES, AND BE KILLED, AND BE RAISED AGAIN THE THIRD DAY. — St. Matt. xvi. 21.

O HOLY Spirit of Grace, be with me, I beseech Thee, in my meditations, that I may profitably follow the steps of my blessed Saviour, to the improvement of my growth in holiness, and to the extirpation of my many sins, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD.

Now, the days from henceforward to the death of our most blessed Saviour, we may consider to be like the vigils or eves of His Passion; for now He began, and often returned to, those sad predictions of His cruel usage by the chief priests and elders, and how that He must suffer many things at Jerusalem, and be killed,

and rise again on the third day. I must remark that our blessed LORD first probed the faith of His disciples, and then, upon their confession of His being the CHRIST, He began to prepare their minds for the sad events which were coming upon them. He intended to draw their minds with Him. He now "began to shew them." He afterwards developed his meaning more fully. He must needs go to Jerusalem; to be put to death indeed, in the Jerusalem which is below, but to rise again in the heavenly Jerusalem. He is to suffer many things from the elders of the earthly Jerusalem, that He may be glorified by those heavenly elders who receive His mercies. He rose again from the dead on the third day, that He may deliver from the evil one, and purchase for such as are so delivered, this gift — that they may be baptized in spirit, soul and body, in the Name of the FATHER, and the SON, and the HOLY SPIRIT.

And well was it for the disciples that they should have such astounding news broken to them by degrees; it shews us in another form the great love and consideration of our dearest LORD for His disciples. He knew their attach-

ment to Him; He knew also how difficult it would be for their minds to comprehend why He, Who was so good, so wonderful, and so loving a Master, should undergo such cruel sufferings; and He "began to tell them," that when the time drew near, their faith might not fail them.

Peter instantly, thinking that such things were unworthy the Son of God, began to rebuke Him: "Be it far from Thee, LORD." But JESUS said unto His disciples: If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me; as if He said, Ye speak as if to hinder Me from My sufferings would benefit Me; but I say unto you, that unless ye also suffer with Me, ye cannot partake of My salvation. All self must be removed, and the whole life and affections must be given to God, that He may fashion them according to His will; then follow the holy way of the Cross, and enter into the place prepared for those who follow their Saviour in all things.

And now, my soul, hear thy Saviour warning thee of His approaching Passion; He tells thee, in His abounding love and mercy, that thou mayest make the best use of the precious sea-

son which is now hastening on. If thou wert to come upon the contemplation of such woeful mysteries, unprepared, the prospect would take away thy powers of profiting by them, so completely would the sorrow absorb all thy other feelings; thou must, therefore, set to work, and fortify thyself with meditating upon thy LORD's wondrous love in taking upon Him thy nature; thou must never lose sight of the great fact, that it is GOD Who so suffered, and Who so willingly gave Himself up to the hands of wicked men, and Who suffered so cruel a death, that all the world might be saved — that thou, my soul, might be saved. Never fail in all thy meditations to look upon thyself as the cause of CHRIST's sufferings; thy sins, thy infirmities, were always in view; they created that direful agony, they called forth that bitter cry, they were the nails that transfixed that precious Body to the Cross; to cleanse them, those streams of Blood poured from the wounds; and canst thou meditate on these facts, and think that thou canst again return to thy former ways? Wilt thou then be continually crucifying thy LORD? Dost thou count that Blood no holy thing? O turn

to thy Saviour, and entreat Him to write on the tables of thy heart every word of that doleful history; begin now — print it there; let no word be effaced, but let every syllable remain with thee and live with thee from henceforth.

And what will be the fruit of this continual memory of thy LORD's Passion? Let it be a constant endeavour to follow, if at ever so humble a distance, that heavenly example; deny thyself, be not careful for ease, or comfort, or praise, or satisfaction of any kind; even if spiritual comforts are denied thee, murmur not; let the world revile thee, and chief men cause thee to suffer many things; let thy life be threatened, and thy good name be taken from thee; be of good cheer, and remember thy Saviour's words: Deny thyself, take up thy cross and follow Me. And is not this enough: "Follow Me?" O let me suffer what I may—mental anguish, bodily pain, taunts and revilings of men, spiritual destitution, yea and even a cruel death—if I may but follow Thee, my Saviour, how happy ought I to be! O grant me faith, and courage, and strength, a single eye to Thy glory, and a heart wholly devoted to Thee! Then will I not be afraid, though the

rain descend, and the floods come, and the winds blow ; they may beat upon me and I shall not fall, for I am on a rock, and that rock is CHRIST. In the time of trouble He will hide me in His tabernacle ; yea, in the secret place of His dwelling shall He hide me and set me up on a rock of stone.

Wednesday**AFTER THIRD SUNDAY.**

JESUS TAKETH PETER, JAMES, AND JOHN HIS BROTHER, AND BRINGETH THEM UP INTO AN HIGH MOUNTAIN APART, AND WAS TRANSFIGURED BEFORE THEM : AND HIS FACE DID SHINE AS THE SUN, AND HIS RAIMENT WAS WHITE AS THE LIGHT. — St. Matt. xvii. 1, 2.

O HOLY Spirit of Grace, be with me, I beseech Thee, in my meditations, that I may profitably follow the steps of my blessed Saviour, to the improvement of my growth in holiness, and to the extirpation of my many sins, through **JESUS CHRIST** our LORD.

It has been remarked that our blessed Saviour never spoke of His Passion but before and after He worked some great miracle. Accordingly, after His last discourse, in six days' time He taketh His three disciples into a high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them.

Wednesday after Third Sunday. 115

Go with them, my soul, and observe that He takes Peter as the most zealous, John as the best beloved, and James because, next to both, he loved and was most loved. They ascend the Mount Tabor; all divine affairs of any importance have been transacted on hills; here let me remember Mount Sinai, Mount Moriah, Mount Rephidim, Mount Carmel, and the Mount of Olives, dear to every Christian's heart, and held in tender, but melancholy remembrance; now truly may I say, "I have looked unto the hills from whence cometh my help," and I may go with my Saviour unto Tabor and there learn to understand His great majesty and surpassing glory.

"And He was transfigured before them." Let me stand and wonder at this great sight; that face in which there "was no beauty" now shines as the sun, it gives forth beams of celestial light; and that seamless coat which after became a prey to ferocious robbers, is now white and spotless. How can I look forward from this scene of glory? O my Saviour, how glorious art Thou on Tabor! What can Thy glory be in heaven, if such is the glory of Thy humanity? But He is not alone; two talk with

Him, Moses and Elias, both fit companions on such a majestic occasion. Both talked with God in Horeb, both were types of CHRIST, both fasted forty days, both divided the waters, both were messengers of God to kings ; a chariot of fire took Elias from this world, he was sought by the prophets and not found ; Michael strove with the devil for the body of Moses, he was sought for by the Jews and not found ; and now both are together on Mount Tabor, and they talk with the LORD of His decease. Oh, wonderful, when He was all bright and glorious, to talk of the shame, the spitting, which was to disfigure that radiant countenance ! When His garments were all white and glistening, to tell of their being stripped off Him and divided ! When He was in company with saints, to talk of His being in company with revilers and malefactors ! When in His greatest glory, to talk of His deepest humiliations ! But His disciples, how are they employed ? They all sleep. They awake, and then Peter exclaims, not knowing what he says, " LORD, it is good for us to be here." Peter spoke unadvisedly, he ought not to have tempted God. How could he presume to say, It is good to be here ? How

Wednesday after Third Sunday. 117

could any presume to give an opinion before God? And his wish to build three tabernacles savoured of the presumption which a bitter trial, under very different circumstances, was to correct and drive away.

A cloud overshadows them; they fear; and a voice proceeds from the cloud, proclaiming CHRIST at once the SON of God and the Reconciler of the world. The disciples fall on their faces. Who can blame a mortal man to be thus affected at the voice of his Maker? But JESUS touched them, and that healing hand raised them, that consoling voice allayed their fears; they looked up, they saw no man, they were alone with their LORD!

O Saviour, it matters not who is away when Thou art with us. Thou art God, all-sufficient, and Thy presence can make Tabor a heaven!

Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD, and who shall rise up in His holy place?

Even he that hath clean hands and a pure heart, that hath not lift up his mind to vanity, nor sworn to deceive his neighbour.

Even so, LORD, prepare me to go up unto Tabor; let me this day in heart and mind thither ascend. Grant me clean hands and

a pure heart, a guileless spirit and great simplicity. There are three men with my Saviour. Consider them, O my soul, how blest they are in being thus chosen; remember that they who thus were going to witness their Lord's glory, were afterwards present at His agony, and yet they all forsook Him and fled in His greatest need. If such were the weakness of their faith, take great heed to support thine own, and let thine ascent to Tabor be the commencement of a life of more lively, active faith, and intenser love than heretofore. The sight of my Saviour's radiant glory is beyond what human eyes can understand. Without doubt millions upon millions of angels witnessed the glorious spectacle, though none were visible; only two glorified saints were with Him. And shall none but those who saw Him in Horeb and Carmel see Him in the Tabor of heaven? O my soul, was not the whole of CHRIST's Body made glorious at the transfiguration? Is He not the head, and we the members? If those two blessed saints were the more excellent parts, thou and the rest of His Church are other, though inferior, members. His Body is not perfect in glory without ours. "When

Wednesday after Third Sunday. 119

CHRIST, Which is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory." O may I, and all mine, when the sentence shall come to take us from this mortal life, gladly ascend the hill to meet our glorified Saviour, there to live and reign with Him together, in His eternal kingdom.

"It is good for us to be here." Where is it so good to be? Not, surely, in the busy market, or amid the toils of the world, or the pleasures of this life! There can be no food for thee anywhere but where thou mayest ascend and see thy Saviour. Sometimes thou must see His humiliations, and take up thy cross to follow Him. But sometimes He shews thee His glory; Oh! when He does vouchsafe to manifest Himself to thee, open thyself to His blessed motions, restrain not thy feelings, adore thy glorified Master; hear the Voice proclaiming Him to be the only begotten and well-beloved of the Father; adore Him; worship Him; pour out thy whole soul before Him, He is worthy to be praised and highly exalted; Light of light, very God of very God, Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace! Lift up thyself

from thy adoring posture, the brightness is departed, all things are as they were before; but Jesus is there, He never will leave thee. But holy raptures, and visions of glory and of bliss are not for this world; thou must descend the mountain, happy in having seen that glory, happy in having thy Saviour with thee, and strengthened for the trials, the crosses, the miseries of the world; and looking beyond them to another vision of beauty, another scene of glory in the heavenly Tabor, where thou mayest for ever dwell with that blessed Saviour, Who, to purchase it for thee, accomplished His decease at Jerusalem.

Thursday

AFTER THIRD SUNDAY.

VERILY I SAY UNTO YOU, EXCEPT YE BE CONVERTED, AND
BECOME AS LITTLE CHILDREN, YE SHALL NOT ENTER INTO
THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.—St. Matt. xviii. 3.

O HOLY Spirit of Grace, be with me, I beseech Thee, in my meditations, that I may profitably follow the steps of my blessed Saviour, to the improvement of my growth in holiness, and to the extirpation of my many sins, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD.

Our LORD descended the mountain, and charged His disciples to tell no man what they had seen, until the Son of Man should be risen from the dead. This He did lest men should be offended, hearing such glorious things of Him Whom they were about to see crucified. Then the disciples asked Him about Elias, and He told them that Elias was come already, for

as Elias was to be the forerunner of the second Advent, so had John the Baptist been of the first; and as they had done unto him whatsoever they listed, so, according to the Scriptures, must the Son of Man suffer. They reached the plain at the foot of Mount Tabor, and there was gathered together a great multitude; a man advances from the crowd, and begs JESUS to have mercy on his son, who is lunatic, adding that he had besought the disciples, but they could not cure him. JESUS rebuked their want of faith, and cast out the deaf and dumb spirit.

Thence JESUS departed into Galilee, and on His way again referred to His Passion, which so afflicted His disciples that they durst no more ask him any questions, lest He should again take occasion to speak of what was sorrowful, and therefore made them feel uneasy. How do we always consult our own ease, and try to administer comfort to ourselves by turning from what is unpleasant, however salutary it may be that our souls should be so afflicted. O LORD, give me spiritual courage, that I may be ever bold in facing those things which, however painful at the time, are the best medicine

that my soul can receive; let me not shrink from Thy wholesome discipline; rather do Thou smite me friendly and reprove me, but let not Thy precious balms break my head.

They again return to Capernaum, where our blessed LORD commanded Peter to pay the tribute money, wherein I must observe His wisdom; He neither refused to pay the tribute nor merely commanded it to be paid; He first shows that He is by right exempt, and then bids to give the money. Let me, in following my Saviour's example, always seek to avoid giving offence or causing scandal to my neighbour; at the same time that I must know when offence must needs come from asserting the truth, the truth must not be forsaken.

At the same time the disciples had a dispute who was the greatest. They had seen Peter, James, and John admitted to higher privileges than the rest, and they would determine how that would affect them all, when they attended their Master in the kingdom of heaven. Behold our blessed Lord sitting in the midst of them; He calls unto Him a little child, and placing it among them, so as all might see it, He said, "Verily I say unto you, Except ye be

converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

Our blessed Saviour affirms this statement; and as the "verily" shows Him to mean nothing but the precise thing which He says, we must all set about trying to become as little children: it will, indeed, require an entire conversion to bring me into that simple, guileless temper which belongs to early childhood. The first characteristic of a child is devoted love; it stretches forth its little arms towards its parent, and strives to win his attention by smiles and struggles, its great object being to be taken into those arms which it feels to be its surest resting place. Is such my love to my heavenly Father? O Father, pour Thy love into my heart, that I may long and desire to be with Thee. Behold, LORD, I stretch out my arms to be received into Thy bosom; there is peace and rest; there shall I dwell secure. O help me in my efforts to gain this safe resting place, and fold me in Thine arms to shield me from all harm. A little child believes all things; it thinks no evil of others, expects no evil from others, it is perfectly content; it lives for the present, because the present gives all that it

desires ; it lives in a world of its own, every thing around it is good and fair, it is thankful for all, and it is loving to all ; joy and mirth are constantly springing from the pure fountain within ; and when it lies down to rest, its slumbers are sweet ; smiles sit upon the fair cheek, the spirit is reposing, and angels are at once shielding it with their wings, and beholding the pure, holy, and glorious majesty of Him Who is the Creator of these pure little ones.

My soul, canst thou see in this description any trace of thyself ? Such thou wert once, when first received, bright with drops of baptismal dew, into the ark of CHRIST'S Church. Now thou art not easily led into the truth, reason sits upon her throne within thee, and makes faith bow down to serve her ; thou art suspicious, cautious, reserved, apt to find fault, often discontented ; thou art ever lamenting the past — oh, sad inheritance entailed by sin ! thou art ever anticipating the future, instead of performing thy present duties with all thy might ; thou art prone to be ungrateful ; thou forgettest the mercies which God has poured upon thee ; thou art gloomy, uneven in temper, and depression and langour too frequently come

over thee; thou liest down to sleep, but worldly cares, anxious thoughts, busy designs, flock round thy couch, and thou art sleepless and uneasy.

O LORD, convert my soul, and lead me forth in the paths of righteousness, for Thy Name's sake. Let me not blame the world or anything but my own self for my many sins and imperfections. Thou hast placed me in a state of probation, and in it I may walk soberly, purely, honestly, if I obey Thy laws and listen not to the dictates of my corrupt nature. Make me, O LORD, pure in heart, merciful, and a peacemaker; make me a true mourner over my many sins, and do Thou consecrate me to be a holy temple unto Thyself; living in this world a sober, righteous and holy life, with a spirit elevated to behold Thy glorious works, and with the temper of a little child.

Friday

AFTER THIRD SUNDAY.

**AFTER THESE THINGS JESUS WALKED IN GALILEE : FOR HE
WOULD NOT WALK IN JEWRY, BECAUSE THE JEWS
SOUGHT TO KILL HIM.—St. John, vii. 1.**

O HOLY Spirit of Grace, be with me, I beseech Thee, in my meditations, that I may profitably follow the steps of my blessedaviour, to the improvement of my growth in holiness, and to the extirpation of my many sins, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD.

Our blessed LORD is ever showing us an example, which it would be well if we would always bear in mind, and endeavour to follow. We must not suppose that He could not, but that He “would not” walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill Him. That they would ultimately accomplish this wicked purpose, He had not long before foretold; but He knew

that His hour was not yet come, that He had a work to do yet, and, until that was accomplished, He avoided all communication with Judca. This is a lesson to those who put themselves in the way of persecution, when by a little "walking" out of sight, they might still the enemy; and when, for the sake of distinction, they thrust themselves into dangers, which the cause of God does not require them to encounter. Our humble Saviour never shews Himself but for a good purpose, nothing is done for effect or show; though I feel as if uttering irreverent words in so saying; yet how necessary is it to remind myself, that if I really and indeed seek God's glory in all my actions, I shall gladly step aside from the sight of man, when His work is best done in silence, or in "tarrying His leisure."

The Jews' feast of Tabernacles was at hand, and the brethren (by which word I must understand the relations of the Virgin Mary) of our Lord taught Him with His remaining in Jerusalem, and dare Him to show Who He was, by the works He did: as if they had said, "He has been here, show Thyself to the world; let us see some of the works which Thou pro-

fessest, Thou owest it to Thy disciples to show them such wonders." "For neither did His brethren believe in Him."

O my Saviour, Thy miracles, Thy gracious words, Thy loving deeds, do not convince even Thy brethren! The Jews have seen all these, and yet they seek to kill Thee! Is it not enough that Thou art eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame? Will not they acknowledge that Thou hast eased all their sickness, and carried all their sorrows? Will not the stilling of the tempest do? Neither the raising from the dead? No. Seeing, they see, but do not perceive; and hearing, they hear, and do not understand. Oh, lamentable and awful blindness! awful, because His blood has been invoked upon them and their children; they are under a curse; that blood has set its mark upon them, and they wander about the earth to this day, having darkness still in their hearts.

"Neither did His brethren believe." *I am* of His kindred, baptized, made a child of God, a name from His Name, a son of the covenant; do I believe? His mighty works are ever before my eyes — more, they are in my heart; I see how entirely helpless I am, how in need of

a Saviour ; He has done great things for me, having taken away my heart of stone and given me a heart of flesh : but is my belief real ? or is it only in words ? Do I feel the respect, the love, the deference, which as an Elder Brother I owe to my Saviour ? Is He constantly present with me ? Do I weigh my every action in the balance of the Sanctuary ? And do I really beg of Him to make up my short comings, and to shape my actions more according to the pattern He has set before me ? If I cannot answer myself in these matters, may not I say, " Neither do His brethren believe in Him ? " for if I did, how differently should I live and act, and how attentive should I be to follow the pattern which He left His Father's Throne on High to set me !

O my Saviour, let me not be as the Jews of old ; neither as Thy unbelieving brethren. May I never crucify Thee afresh ; may I never lose the least atom of my faith ! O keep me as the humble younger child in Thy great family, looking up with admiring love and awful wonder at my Elder Brother, and seeking, in my poor feeble way, to imitate Thee ; for which endeavour grant me Thy grace, O God, my Saviour, Who art my hope and strength.

Saturday

AFTER THIRD SUNDAY.

IN THE LAST DAY, THAT GREAT DAY OF THE FEAST, JESUS STOOD AND CRIED, SAYING, IF ANY MAN THIRST, LET HIM COME UNTO ME, AND DRINK. — St. John, vii. 37.

O HOLY Spirit of Grace, be with me, I beseech Thee, in my meditations, that I may profitably follow the steps of my blessed Saviour, to the improvement of my growth in holiness, and to the extirpation of my many sins, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD.

When His brethren were gone up, then went Jesus also up — not openly, but as it were in secret. He goes up, not to suffer, but to teach; and He goes secretly, because, though He might have gone openly, and kept the violence of the Jews in check, as He had often done before, yet He wished to conceal His divinity, and to appear as man, that the fact of His Incarnation

might be established; and also to teach us the way of life.

At Jerusalem there were great discussions and disputes about Him. The Jews sought Him to kill Him; but many people were convinced by His works, and said, "He is a good Man." Others thought Him a deceiver. How very wonderful do these differences of sentiment appear to us! and yet, practically, even in these our days, men act in the same manner. Some by evil practices seek to crucify Him afresh; others think His way a good one, and Him worthy of all imitation; they delay following Him, and all ends in words: others think His a heavy burden and wearisome yoke, and indeed set Him down as a deceiver. And how true is it now that no man speaks openly of Him, for fear of the world! they are ashamed to profess openly their religion; it is the "custom" to have a religion, but it is the custom also to keep it close, and not to let it affect external behaviour. O my soul, ponder these things, and if the analogy between these times and those preceding our blessed Lord's sufferings comes home to thee, take it as a warning that the time approaches

when He will again appear among us—but not now to teach, and exhort, and to suffer; but to judge, to punish, or to lead us to glory.

Behold our LORD again in the temple; He teaches; men marvel;—do they not recognize Him? how perverse is even their admiration! and how blind are they when He testifies of His Father; when He upbraids them for the narrowness of their minds and hearts. No wonder they marvel at His boldness; He speaks openly, and yet He is not taken; they sought to take Him, but could not, for His time was not yet come; and they give unconscious testimony to Him, for they say “We know whence this Man is;” and, indeed, they knew not, for they knew not the Father Who sent Him.


The last day of the feast is come, and JESUS stands in the temple; He lifts up His voice and cries, that all may hear the great truth He is teaching, “If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink.” Here is an offer of the Spirit to those who truly seek it through CHRIST; the Spirit is not given by measure—“rivers” are said to flow from them.

O LORD, whither shall I go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. To Thee, therefore, do I

flee, O my Saviour; of Thee do I beg grace. My soul is athirst for Thee; give me to drink of Thy pleasures as of a river. O my soul, hear the words of prophecy, and cherish them in thy heart; thou shalt not lack any thing that is good: "Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea, come and buy wine and milk without money and without price."

I have no money; nothing have I to offer to my LORD in return for all His mercies and favours, and yet He lets me buy. Oh, wonderful love! If I were not so unworthy, I would offer myself and every energy and faculty I possess for the acceptance of my God. And here I do offer myself, O LORD, unto Thee, unworthy as I am. I am Thine by inheritance, by purchase, and by my own free will; take me, LORD, and make me more fit to be a temple consecrated to Thy service.

"The Spirit and the bride say, Come; and let him that heareth say, Come; and let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, let him take the waters of life freely." Jesus, my Saviour, has told me to come, and there-



ore with joy shall I draw water out of the wells of salvation; for He says, I will pour water in him that is thirsty and floods on the dry round: I will pour My Spirit upon My seed, and My blessing upon their offspring.


O blessed LORD, Thy Spirit is poured out as rivers of waters to refresh, to purify, to enliven; and yet how barren and dry is my soul! LORD, my soul gaspeth unto Thee as a thirsty land, my throat is dry, I am weary of my groaning, let me come unto Thee; enlighten my mind, and let me believe firmly on Thy promises, and let me go to Thee, Who canst give me living waters, and Who wilt grant that when plentifully refreshed with the pure streams of Thy grace, I shall not thirst any more for ever.

Fourth Sunday in Lent.

SO THERE WAS A DIVISION AMONG THE PEOPLE BECAUSE
OF HIM. — St. John, vii. 43.

QUICKEN me by Thy grace, O LORD, and give me Thy Holy Spirit; direct my ignorance, illumine my understanding, and guide me gently in the way of Thy truth, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD.

When the people heard our LORD speak of the Spirit, they said, This is the Prophet; others said, This is the CHRIST. They knew all the predictions in the prophets concerning CHRIST, and this Man Who now came before them answered to the prophecies, in the mighty works which He wrought, in the words which He spake. They knew that He had been brought up at Nazareth, but His birth place they did not know. Why did they ask, "Hath not the Scripture said that CHRIST cometh of



the seed of David?" They knew not His extraction; if they had wished to know of His birth-place and extraction, they would have gone to CHRIST Himself to learn them. They asked their questions in a doubting, captious spirit, and, therefore, seeing their heedlessness and inattention, our LORD did not answer them.

There was a division of the people because of Him. Some would have believed; others cared nothing for those things; but others were fierce against Him, they sought to lay hands on Him, but they did not; restrained, no doubt, by the power of Him Who kept them to fill up the measure of their iniquity.

Why did they not enquire and learn the truth of this wonderful Stranger, Whom all acknowledged to be a Prophet, and many suspected to be the CHRIST? Many, wilfully hardened and blinded, would not hear; many, careless and idle, did not take the trouble of asking. And so there arose a division, and hard words arose among them, and warm disputes, which, as the quarrels of the ignorant always do, led to no settling of the questions.

There are divisions now and disputings; one man says one thing, his neighbour asserts the

direct contrary. Is CHRIST divided? No, truly; but it is because we have not CHRIST, that disputings arise. If we were all to go to our blessed Saviour, and learn of Him, we should then know all the truth, or at least we should be happy to acknowledge how little we can really know, how little we can understand; we should sit at the feet our dearest LORD, and learn of His meekness and lowliness, to count all loss so that we may win Him; to unlearn all the wisdom of the world, to cultivate the temper of a little child, and to look up to Him in silent adoration, which keeps away from all divisions and disputings. But our blessed LORD says, "I am not come to send peace, but a sword." So it has been from the beginning until this day; from the times when the blood of martyrs flowed on all sides until now, when difference of sentiment gives rise to strong moral persecution, men have been divided; and disputes and discussions on religious subjects are ever the most violent. As an individual, let me seek to know the part I have to take in the battle going on round me; let me go to CHRIST, and by diligent prayer, study of the Scriptures, and reading such other books as

shall give me spiritual knowledge, let me be sure of my principles, and of the spirit in which I ought to act; then let me go peacefully on my way, not shrinking from any vindication of the truth which I may be called upon to make, but acting under all circumstances in that spirit of meekness, gentleness, and love, which the disciples of the meek and lowly JESUS ought to possess, and which was so entirely absent from the council of His enemies.

O holy JESUS, Thy blessed doctrines turn the cruelty of the proud into meekness, and cause that the innocency of the weak be protected by the strong, and that charity shall flourish through the world. Thy gracious design is to make us happy by making us holy. Thou Who hast planted the seeds of all these virtues, O give the increase! Defend the good, rebuke the wicked, and fill the earth with Thy knowledge, that all discord and animosity may cease, and justice and equity govern our lives!
Amen.

Monday**AFTER FOURTH SUNDAY.**

AND JESUS WAS LEFT ALONE, AND THE WOMAN STANDING
IN THE MIDST. — St. John, viii. 9.

QUICKEN me by Thy grace, O LORD, and give me Thy Holy Spirit; direct my ignorance, illumine my understanding, and guide me gently in the way of Thy truth, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD.

Our LORD spends His days in the temple, His nights in the Mount of Olives. No doubt His retirement is spent in ineffable communion with the Father. His days are passed in preaching, and teaching, and carrying out His great mission of redemption. Early in the morning He is in the temple; He loses no time in commencing His work; His enemies, active in malice and hatred, lose no time in their endeavours to ensnare Him. He sits and

teaches in the temple; a crowd approach, bringing with them a woman taken in adultery; they place her before JESUS, and they ask Him whether He differs from Moses in His opinion of the punishment to be inflicted on such a crime; they asked, tempting Him. What answerest Thou, O my Saviour? Thou stooped down, and with Thy fingers Thou writest on the ground. I will not curiously enquire into this Thy gesture, I will only take by Thy action what those bystanders understood by it — Thou regardest not those malicious and busy cavillers.

But they press their questions, and behold the LORD raising Himself up from the humiliation of His stooping posture to pronounce both grace and condemnation to His hearers: "Let him that is without sin among you cast the first stone."

Here is exquisite justice, O Saviour! Let sin be punished, but not by sinners; the law carried into effect, but not by transgressors. O powerful voice of conscience! They cannot stand out against it; they go out; they leave JESUS; one by one they go, their sins leading them unresisting away; and He, the Saviour,

is left alone with the woman. Again He lifts up Himself and sees the poor criminal weeping before Him; her guilt is the heaviest that woman can incur; she must have felt terror and dread when encircled by her accusers; she now is alone with her sin, and with JESUS: how much more awful is His pure Majesty than all the noisy railings of her former judges! her sin stands out in hideous contrast to His spotless innocence and purity. "Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?" "No man, LORD." "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more."

O LORD, Thou didst not come to condemn the world; Thou wert the Saviour, and didst not destroy the body, but save the soul. "Neither do I condemn thee." O merciful Saviour, Thou lettest in a ray of hope for the most sinful; Thou dost not condemn; how can we ever enough magnify Thy mercy, Who takest no pleasure in the death of a sinner! Thou sayest, "Go, and sin no more." The past sin is absolutely remitted, there is no condition made; but the future is marked out, and it must be a future of active penitence—"Sin no more." And how gladly does the wretched, weeping

outcast catch at the condition ! No doubt she thinks a life devoted to acts of righteousness will not sufficiently testify her gratitude to her merciful LORD, and yet it is all she can offer. It is all Thou hast to offer, O my soul, for the sins, for the perseverance in sin, which thou hast to deplore. "Go, and sin no more." Yes, gracious LORD, give me Thy help, and my intense gratitude to Thee, for all Thy mercies, shall be shown forth in my steadfast endeavours not only to commit no sin, but to lead a life closer to Thee, in obedience to all Thy commands, and in waiting still upon God.

But though our blessed LORD would not then be a Judge, yet He will come again to enquire whether His injunctions have been obeyed. "We believe that Thou shalt come to be our Judge." O LORD, let me hear Thee speak to me now ; I am strangely careless, I cannot fully realise that Thou wilt punish, and yet I know that thou sayest to me, "Sin no more." Thou hast said it unto me night by night when I have bewailed my daily offences and short comings ; Thou hast said it by the voice of the preacher ; Thou hast said it by the lives of the saints ; Thou hast said it by the sudden

death of friends. Thou wilt come again ; Thou wilt investigate whether I have obeyed Thy voice ; Thou wilt hear what the accuser has to say against me. I shall stand before Thee weeping and affrighted, because I know that from Thy last tribunal there will be no appeal ; Thou wilt judge every one according to his works. My soul, tell thyself over and over again the words that thy Saviour has said unto thee, "Go, and sin no more." Make them the awakening tones of thy drowsy conscience, and remember that unless thou now hearest, "Go and sin no more," thou wilt, in the last day, hear thy Judge pronounce, "Go, ye accursed."

Tuesday

AFTER FOURTH SUNDAY.

NOW A CERTAIN MAN WAS SICK, NAMED LAZARUS, OF
BETHANY, THE TOWN OF MARY AND HER SISTER
MARTHA. — St. John, xi. 1.

Q UICKEN me by Thy grace, O LORD, and
give me Thy Holy Spirit; direct my ig-
norance, illumine my understanding, and guide
me gently in the way of Thy truth, through
JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD.

When our LORD had performed the act of
grace and mercy, which I considered yesterday,
He continued teaching in the Temple; many,
convinced by His powerful words, believed on
Him, but more still kept their old heart of un-
belief; and when He asserted His everlasting
Godhead, they became outrageous, and took up
stones to kill Him, but He hid Himself, and
went out of the Temple. As He passed along

He met a man who had been blind from his birth ; our LORD anointed his eyes with clay, and bade him go and wash in the pool of Siloam : he went, and returned seeing. Thus shall we, when the imperfections of mortality have been cast off, see the incomprehensible brightness which surrounds the majesty of God ; we shall see our beloved LORD, Who has done such marvellous things for us. O my soul, in thinking upon the return of this blind beggar to Jerusalem, seeing all the glories of that fair place, beholding the majesty of the Temple, casting his eyes to the hills which stand about her, and finally coming to JESUS Himself, and beholding his Benefactor, his Saviour, his Deliverer — carry on thy thoughts to that day, when thy LORD will open thine eyes to behold the glorious things He has purchased for thee : thou wilt behold the heavenly Jerusalem, with foundations of gems, and her streets of gold, and her gates of pearl ; and thou wilt see thy adored Saviour, the Lamb, Who is the light and the brightness thereof. O LORD, I am unworthy ; I know not how Thou canst reserve such things for so great a sinner ; but I know, what Thou hast promised that Thou art able

to perform. Again our LORD taught in the temple, and again they sought to stone Him; but twice He escaped from those wicked men, and He retired beyond Jordan. O my soul! I wish that I could think of Thee here in peace for a brief space; but no, Thy work must go on. "Many resorted to Him there," and many "believed on Him."

But sadness comes after Him; He has had to endure the taunts and the persecutions of His enemies: now His righteous soul is to be wrung with compassion for His friends. Lazarus is sick, and his sisters, Martha and Mary, send to tell their dear LORD how that he, whom He loved, was attacked with a grievous malady. What a distinction is it for Lazarus and his sisters to be beloved of the LORD! What longings does it create in me to be alike beloved; yet, does He love those whom He appears not to regard! Oh, yes! even His love is both above ours and often contrary to ours. His very affection causes Him to be sometimes absent. There are none of His but have sometimes cried "How long, LORD?" The LORD abode ten days in the same place before He went to the succour of His friends; and when


He proposed to His disciples to go into Judea again, they, fearing for His safety, remind Him of the attempted violence of the Jews ; but He tells them that there is an appointed time for every work, and that He must finish what He had to do, before that gloomy and dark night come in which He, the sun, shall be withdrawn from their eyes.

“Our friend Lazarus sleepeth.” Here is a community of friendship, and a familiarity inexpressibly gracious ; those who are His friends “sleep.” Grant, O Saviour, that when I depart hence I may sleep in Thee ; and that when I have slept enough, Thou wilt raise me as Thou didst Lazarus.

Our LORD JESUS was glad for our sakes that He was not there ! yet the two sisters were sorry for that very cause. O my soul, remember this whenever thou art in any pain or sorrow ; thou knowest that thy Saviour sees thee and pities thee, yet He keeps from thee for a time ; He rejoices in thy faith, thy patience, thy tears ; why should not thy will be more conformed to His, why shouldest thou not, though so sorrowful, be always rejoicing ? then thy LORD will go to thee ; He will raise thee.

Oh what a privilege to have a friend who will disregard the horrors of the charnel house, and will be constant, loving, and ready to aid, when the grave has closed, and all other friends have gone weeping away.

JESUS and His disciples drew near to Bethany; behold Martha hastening to meet Him; her deep affliction and her great regret find vent in words. JESUS sweetly and mildly comforts her; He brings out her faith; He raises her hope; and she returns with a heart raised to some great expectation, from the Godhead and power of CHRIST. She calls to her sister Mary, "The Master is come, and calleth for thee." Still is this great mercy granted to us: CHRIST calls for us. In a great affliction; in the death of some much beloved Lazarus; in the many cares of life; in sickness; in loneliness; CHRIST calls us. His voice may be heard, if, like Mary, we have before sat at His feet, and learnt its gracious tones: or perchance a kind sister calls us; blessed will it be to us, if, with Mary, we rise up quickly and attend the summons. Although surrounded by friends, whose express business is to give her comfort, she leaves them, and her sorrow, and her



thoughts, and her cares, and goes quickly to her Saviour. My soul, first sit at JESUS' feet, and learn to love thy Saviour; entertain Him in thy house, and then, when thy grief comes, and come it must and will, go to JESUS, with faith, and with hope, and with love; He knows all, and sympathises in thy sorrow, and He will give thee, together with present helps and comforts, promises of future blessings, and glimpses of future glory, which will make thee not only patient, but to glory in tribulations also.

Wednesday

AFTER FOURTH SUNDAY.

JESUS WEPT. THEN SAID THE JEWS, BEHOLD HOW HE
LOVED HIM! — St. John, xi. 35, 36.

QUICKEN me by Thy grace, O LORD,
and give me Thy Holy Spirit; direct my
ignorance, illumine my understanding, and
guide me gently in the way of Thy truth,
through JESUS CHRIST our LORD.

When Mary rose to go to her LORD, the Jews
thought she went to the grave to weep there.
How natural is it for extreme grief to feed itself
upon sights which are apt to renew the sorrow;
how easily can I imagine that every object in
that sad house would bring back the image of
her lost brother to the weeping Mary. Here
is his chamber, — here he was wont to sit, —
there he used to walk; and at the grave, well
may her feelings be fresh stirred up, for there

is Lazarus. This reflection does but remind me, that if our grief is so stirred and we are so drawn towards the grave of a departed friend, why are not our hearts drawn up to heaven, where our best Friend, our only Saviour, sits at the right hand of the Father? There, Thou Who wert dead and art alive again, art in Body and Soul, united to Thy glorious Deity. Thither let our access be; there, where is no place for sorrow, but where joys unspeakable and glorious shall make us evermore rejoice.

Mary meets her LORD; her greater devotion causes her to fall at her LORD's feet, and that adoring posture silently confesses her faith. When she does speak, her words are like her sister's, but she makes no request; she weeps, and her tears bring down those of her sorrowing friends. JESUS sees their sorrow;—turn which way He will, He sees nothing but tears; He hears groans and sobs. His soul is moved, He is troubled; He lays aside all but His humanity, and He asks, "Where have you laid him?" Behold the sad company proceeding to the grave. The Son of Man thinks upon His friend,—He thinks of *all* those who are His friends; and, mixing His feelings of humanity

Wednesday after Fourth Sunday. 153

with His divine prescience of all human sorrow, He weeps. JESUS weeps! See how He loved him! Yea, LORD, what precious tears are Thine; nothing but love draws them from Thee. Tears are now for ever sanctified until Thou Thyself shalt wipe them from all eyes.

They arrive at the grave. JESUS again groans in spirit; for besides the love He bears to Lazarus, besides the faith and love of the sisters, He sees another cause for another kind of sorrow; and that last groan was drawn forth by unbelief. The stone is on the cave,—the body has seen corruption; still, the command has gone forth and the stone is rolled away. Now, the Man Who was touched with a feeling of our infirmities, stands—God manifest in the flesh! He raises His eyes, He speaks to the FATHER; He prays not, for no request passes His lips; but He utters words of communion, of thanks, and of confidence. His eyes are lifted up to His Father, and now His voice is raised. He stands on the brink of the grave, and cries in a loud voice: that voice is mighty in operation—it is a glorious voice,—for he that was dead came forth bound in the grave-clothes; again the command is given to loose him, and Laza-

rus is free. Mary and Martha must have stood by and witnessed these things with horror, with dread, with awe; by degrees these feelings melted into love and joy, adoration and praise. He that had been dead four days, and whose mortality was turning into corruption, stood among them alive. He Who had wept with them, and Who had groaned over their sorrows, stood among them, God. They had heard His wonderful communion with His Father, they had seen Him call their brother forth. What can their feelings be? With tears wet upon those divine cheeks, He had eased the sorrow which those tears had called forth. They can but adore—they can but dedicate the rest of their lives to His service; they can but follow Him whithersoever He goeth.

My soul, there is something in this narrative which is inexpressibly touching. Tears are infectious, and thou weepest to read the history of Lazarus and his sisters; but the death of a brother, and the grief of two sisters, is no uncommon tale—the next street will no doubt furnish such a one. The question is, *will* it furnish such a one? Is JESUS there? Does

He discourse to the faithful ear of the hope in store, of the resurrection, and of glories hereafter? Does the eye of faith see the sympathizing JESUS following to the grave. Do His tears sanctify the sorrows, which without Him would be unbearable? Go, my soul, and think of thy Saviour's love in shedding tears for our sorrows; be no more ashamed of natural grief, but stand over the grave and hear "I am the Resurrection and the Life," and "Whosoever believeth in Me shall never die." Thy Saviour speaks these words to thee. He bids thee be comforted. He sees thy sorrow, and sees thy tears; He will not leave thee. Stand by in faith, wait in patience: then shalt thou hear a loud voice—the voice as of a trumpet; the dead shall come forth—they shall see their Saviour. Those who have heard His voice, shall go in with Him to the marriage; and those who are without, shall then knock in vain.

Thursday

AFTER FOURTH SUNDAY.

AND IT CAME TO PASS, WHEN THE TIME WAS COME THAT HE,
SHOULD BE RECEIVED UP, HE STEADFASTLY SET HIS
FACE TO GO TO JERUSALEM.—St. Luke, ix. 51.

QUICKEN me by Thy grace, O LORD, and give me Thy Holy Spirit; direct my ignorance, illumine my understanding, and guide me gently in the way of Thy truth, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD.

Our LORD retired to a city called Ephraim, and there continued with His disciples. This He did because the Jews took counsel together to put Him to death. This He did, not because He shrunk from death, or wished to avoid the Jews, but because His time was not come. But it came to pass, when His time was come, that He set His face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem. Well did He know the plots

that were set against Him, and what the end of those designs would be ; but He went steadfastly, as a lamb to the slaughter. He looked beyond the present time, and the sufferings which He had to endure, and He saw the host of the redeemed surrounding Him in the heaven to which He was returning, and which He had purchased for them.

This is the way to receive death ; to set our faces steadfastly to regard it under every aspect, and to be prepared to encounter it whenever it may come. There must be much awe and great fear in approaching death ; there is a mystery in the dark valley which we shrink from ; and there are unknown sufferings before the soul takes its final departure which may well make the stoutest heart to quail. How then can we set our faces steadfastly to journey towards the final scene of our mortal pilgrimage ? In following Thee, O my Saviour, although death cannot be swallowed up in victory, yet the sting of it will be withdrawn. O Thou most pure and sinless Lamb, let me be humbly observant of all Thy doings, let me endeavour to purify myself as Thou art pure, and to receive the benefit of those sufferings which Thou

didst endure to free me from everlasting torture.

I must then be prepared for death by being ready to receive it any moment ; I must set my face steadfastly towards it ; if I do so, I shall see beyond it a transcendent glory, to attain which any pain should be received with joy. Can any sufferings in time be compared to an eternity of joy hereafter ? Be ready, then, O my soul, for thy latter end, by leading a life of purity here ; thou wilt have to stand with thy loins girt as for a journey, and many will be the perils and hindrances of the road ; but be not dismayed, fight thy way manfully, overcome thy own sins and the attacks of thy enemies, and be sure that thou canst attain the heavenly Jerusalem, for thy LORD has travelled the road before thee, He has cleared the way ; and if in steadfastness thou pursuest it in His footsteps, thou wilt, in due time, have an eternal reward for all thy toils.

The way from Galilee to Judea lay through Samaria, and JESUS would have rested in a village of the Samaritans, and sent messengers to prepare for Him ; but they would not receive Him ; looking towards Jerusalem was the cause

of repulse. How strange to hear the Son of Man sue for a lodging, and for Him to be repulsed! James and John were angry at the insult, and begged their Master to allow them to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, as Elias did. It is a rare thing for our LORD to find fault with errors of zeal, but He here turns round upon them, and rebukes them severely: "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of." They wished to imitate the spirit of Elias, but their LORD tells them they have mistaken their aim. How grieved they must have been to think that any but God's Spirit had animated them. They now are told that the evil spirit had stirred them up.

O my Saviour, Thou didst indeed come to save lives. Thy Spirit does never stir up men to deeds of revenge and blood, and Thy acts are perpetual memorials of Thy saving mercy. Thou chastenest and correctest, but Thou killest not; and when any offend Thee Thou dost always stand forth in order to save to the uttermost. How can we enough praise Thy mercy, O Thou preserver of men! How should we imitate Thy beneficent and saving dispo-

sition towards mankind ! The nearer we come to Thee the more we can help to save ; the further we live from Thee the nearer we are to the great destroyer.

Friday

AFTER FOURTH SUNDAY.

AND JESUS SAID UNTO HIM, NO MAN, HAVING PUT HIS HAND
TO THE PLOUGH, AND LOOKING BACK, IS FIT FOR THE
KINGDOM OF GOD. — St. Luke, ix. 62.

QUICKEN me by Thy grace, O LORD,
and give me Thy Holy Spirit; direct my
ignorance, illumine my understanding, and
guide me gently in the way of Thy truth,
through JESUS CHRIST our LORD.

Our LORD travelled on towards Jerusalem,
and He taught and preached by the way. I
may suppose that a multitude followed Him,
and that many were induced, from the excite-
ment of the moment, to offer to be His disci-
ples, and to follow Him whithersoever he went.
But His was a life of toil and privation, and
there were few whose faith could stand against
such trials. He required that the whole heart


and affections should be His. He acknowledged in His disciples no superior ties ; and no claims of kindred equalled those He possessed over His own. He allowed no farewells, no leave takings. He could not suffer even a lingering glance at the home and the friends, who were being given up for His sake. And yet our dearest LORD was tender and loving, and most compassionate. He did not disregard His kinsfolk, and He had not long before given a most touching proof of His love for His friends. Why was it, then, that He now seems to discourage all outward tokens of respect and affection in His followers to their friends ? It was because of the very solemn nature of the obligation they wished to take upon themselves ; an obligation which would require the highest faith to which it was possible to attain ; to fulfil which every earthly tie must be broken, every worldly desire cast aside. They were “ to preach the kingdom of God ; ” and this not under circumstances favourable to its reception. They were surrounded by enemies ; by the Jews, whose vanity was hurt by not having a king, with all the pomp of royalty, brought to them ; and by the Romans, who were jealous of any authority set up against

their own. But more than all this was the trial they would undergo in witnessing what was coming upon their LORD and Master. They were about to see Him apprehended like a thief, treated as an impostor, cruelly ill-treated, and then crucified in company with robbers and murderers. And yet it was through this disgrace, and in spite of every danger and difficulty, that they were to preach the kingdom of God, to maintain their allegiance to their Master, and to believe Him to be the very CHRIST, the SON of GOD, that Prophet which should come into the world.

In order to be fit for this high calling, this exalted degree of faith, it was necessary that the soul should be braced to its work. There must have been high resolve and stern purpose in that soul which could thus put a hand to the plough which had to go through, as it were, the hard rock. The heart must have been turned from all the enervating effects of earthly affections; yet nothing but love would enable them to do it; but it was the love not of brother, sister, or mother; it was the love to Him Who had given up His seat in His Father's mansions, to Him Whose love compassed such

wonders for His own people. This all-engrossing, all-satisfying love, alone was to be their support; for it, they were to put their hands to the plough; by it, they were to win the prize.

This putting the hand to the plough is a toilsome and laborious business, for which the spirit which tempts to look back upon the comforts and the enjoyments of friends, and the ease we have left behind, will entirely unfit us. There must be no turning back like Lot's wife, or the consequences will be fatal. But let me look upon it as regards myself personally. When I first awoke to the consciousness of my own guilt, and of the value of that inheritance which CHRIST, by His precious blood-shedding, purchased for me, being admitted by baptism to a share in that precious heritage, I was aware that I must "work out my salvation," and that the kingdom of heaven is not given to unprofitable servants. I therefore put my hand to the plough, and began to turn the dry furrows of my soul, and fit them for the reception of the showers of grace which God plentifully sends down upon earnest labourers. I have



still to go on, taking out weeds, which may be compared to sins; stones, which are the worldly hard parts of the character. And thus I have to go on working; very weary I am often; my spirit sinks to see the labour which is before me; but the end of all, the prize to which I aspire, is the possession of heaven itself. Oh, how unfit am I attain this prize when I am distracted, and take no pains, and suffer myself to be led away! This is looking back. I sometimes compare the ease, the gaiety, the luxury of others, with the hard and laborious life I lead; I am inclined to look back; I think how happy I should be to stop and once more enjoy unrestrained the society of my home; but I must not look back; and as my hand gets accustomed to its toil I find many moments of happiness, many flowers are in my road; I may not stop my work, but I may converse with friends as I go on; and I am beginning to feel that the sweet presence of my Saviour, the sanctified communion with friends, the high hopes of eternity, are forming a happiness which no temporal or earthly pleasures can approach. Keep me, O Saviour,

steadfastly at my work; be Thou my guide, and lead me straight on in my heavenward course; oh, let me never be tempted so much as to look back, but grant that I may find peace and joy in my work here, rest and glory in heaven hereafter.

Saturday

AFTER FOURTH SUNDAY.

IN THAT HOUR JESUS REJOICED IN SPIRIT, AND SAID, I THANK THEE, O FATHER, LORD OF HEAVEN AND EARTH, THAT THOU HAST HID THESE THINGS FROM THE WISE AND PRUDENT, AND HAST REVEALED THEM UNTO BABES.—St. Luke x. 21.

QUICKEN me by Thy grace, O LORD, and give me Thy Holy Spirit; direct my ignorance, illumine my understanding, and guide me gently in the way of Thy truth, through JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD.

Our blessed LORD received from the seventy disciples an account of the success of their mission. They returned with joy, saying that even the devils were subject unto them. When the Only Begotten Son came down from heaven, the reign of Satan was over, and he fell from his high estate with as sudden and violent a descent as lightning.

But the Searcher of Hearts must have perceived in His disciples some motions to vain glory, for they rejoiced perhaps not in the subjection of the evil spirits, but in their power to subdue them; our LORD therefore adds, "Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you."

O LORD, why dost Thou permit men to rejoice in the honours Thou conferrest upon them, whereas "in Thy Name shall they rejoice all the day, in Thy righteousness shall they make their boast." Thou, O LORD, shalt raise us to higher joys; by doing Thy blessed Will, whether in heavenly or earthly works, we are thereby written down in the book of life. But as it is written, "Let them be blotted out of the book of the living," let me ever live in fear, lest I turn from virtue, and work the works of the devil, so that my name shall be expunged from the heavenly rolls.

In that day JESUS rejoiced in spirit; He saw that His work, for which He left the bosom of His Father, was being accomplished; He saw in this beginning of the career of His apostles the germ of that mighty work which He was going to die to complete, and for which His righte-




ous soul was straitened until it was finished. Oh the love of our dear LORD! He rejoiced, He gave thanks to His Father; He that was perfectly united to the FATHER, One, as respecting the Godhead, is in manhood inferior to the FATHER, and therefore He gives thanks that by assuming the human nature He has enabled "babes" to understand mysteries which are hid from the wise and prudent. And wonderful is it to see that those whose learning and wisdom ought to have enabled them to see and acknowledge their Saviour, were those who despised and rejected Him; and poor, simple, unlearned fishermen, stood forth to discern their LORD, to confess Him before men, to work miracles, to have power over evil spirits, and to spread the gospel over all lands. This is wonderful, and well may we rejoice with our dear LORD that so it hath pleased the FATHER.

O Thou, Who makest darkness Thy secret place, remove the dark waters and the thick veil from my heart, and make me to see and acknowledge Thee in the true and right sense. I would beg of Thee, O my Saviour, to reveal Thyself to me; let me know Thee, O my LORD; reveal Thyself to me in such measure as shall

be fit for me. I know that to the eye of faith Thou wilt show wondrous things ; withhold not Thou Thyself from me, O LORD, but inspire me with faith, such as Thou only givest to those who desire to see and know Thee in all Thy works.

O my soul, thou must rejoice in having a Saviour Who sees thy progress and watches thy advances towards perfection. Thy attempts are feeble, thy progress is very slow, and yet thou hast the comfort of knowing that Thy LORD can enter into all thy struggles ; He can be touched with a feeling of thy infirmities ; He was in all points tempted as thou art. What an encouragement there is in the reflection that thou hast such a sympathising Friend and Saviour now watching over thee ! Thou hast an additional excitement to struggle valiantly against thy spiritual enemies — thy Saviour rejoices when thou hast gained the victory. Oh, how loving, how condescending in the High and Holy One sitting in glory in heaven, to behold such an imperfect, miserable creature as I am ! I am lost in wonder. O give me a disposition humble and teachable, a mild and meek spirit, a docile and believing mind ; make



Saturday after Fourth Sunday. 171

me as a babe, that I may be enabled to see and comprehend some of these Thy mysteries. To know Thee, my Saviour, is the end of all. O let me come to know Thee, and love Thee, and serve Thee better every day that I live; let me live every day a more devoted and more simple life; and finally take me unto Thyself and teach me the mysteries of Thy kingdom, there where Thyself art the perfection and fruition of all earthly strivings.

Fifth Sunday in Lent.

LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.—St. Luke xi. 1.

LET the beams of Thy Holy Spirit, O LORD, descending from above, enlighten and enkindle in me great fervour, holy importunity, and unwearied industry; that I may serve Thee and obtain Thy blessing, by the assiduity and zeal of my religious offices. I ask this for JESUS CHRIST's sake. *Amen.*

In all our wants, in all our troubles, we flee to our Saviour; He alone can help us, and through Him alone we have access to our heavenly Father. The disciples ask their LORD to teach them to pray; and well may they make the request, for without it they and all succeeding Christians would have lacked that medium of intercourse, that language of heaven, by which they could approach their Father, apply their Redeemer's

merits to their souls, and obtain the aid of the Holy Spirit.

“Ye are God’s building,” says St. Paul; the Christian is therefore God’s house, a temple of the HOLY GHOST: in this dwelling-place, then, there should be not only pure thoughts, holy desires; high aspirations, but there should be a continual longing after direct intercourse with the great Creator, that master Builder, Who has fashioned the whole edifice for His use, and Who will not be content with a small portion of His work, but must have the whole dedicated and given up to Him, that He may re-bestow it to be used for His glory. This longing for communion with God is not, alas, now belonging to our fallen nature. When Adam heard God’s voice in the garden, he hid himself; he could no longer come forth and hold free communion with his Maker; he was conscious of sin; he had forfeited his right to talk with God, and he heard Him in fear, and replied with trembling. But blessed be our all merciful Father: He has sent the second Adam to heal up this wide breach; through Him we may again approach our God in prayer; He has taught our falter-

ing tongues to utter words which may be heard before the Throne of Grace. "LORD, teach us to pray;" we are as little children before Thee; instruct our weakness, and guide us to that blissful intercourse with heaven, which, that we may fully enjoy hereafter, I must begin to practise here. •

"Our Father Which art in heaven." I shall not dare to call God my Father unless I am obedient; and He is not *my* Father, but *our* Father. Let this remind me of my brethren, and that we are all to draw near to our heavenly Father as sons to the same Parent.

Thou art in heaven, O Father. O take my heart there; let my desires be there likewise. Where our treasure is, there must our hearts be also.

Let Thy Name be honoured and adored in all the world. Let me walk worthy of my calling in that most holy Name; and let all my prayers, praises, commemorations, and feeble settings forth of Thy glory, be blessed and effectual for dispersing Thy fame and advancing Thy honour.

Let Thy kingdom come into all the world; establish Thy kingdom of grace, and hasten

Thy kingdom of glory. O establish it in my soul. Do, Thou, O LORD, reign there as King over ever faculty that I possess; and come quickly, gracious LORD; accomplish the number of Thine elect; hasten Thy kingdom; for here we groan, being burdened; in Thy eternal kingdom Thou wilt be ever with us, and there will be fulness of joy.

As angels in heaven serve Thee with harmony, concord, and peace, so let me and all the Church join in the service of Thy Majesty with peace and purity, and in love unfeigned. Let Thy Will be done on earth, in peace and unity, in charity and tranquillity — as it is done in heaven, with joy, and sweetness, and harmony.

Give us, we beseech Thee, all things necessary for the support of our bodies; but above all give us that true Bread from heaven for the support and nourishment of our souls. Give me Thyself, O LORD, to support me in my spiritual warfare, for without Thee I can do nothing.

Forgive my trespasses, O God. I am Thine by adoption, and Thou hast promised Thy pardon; but my sins are more than I can count, and I must continually beseech for pardon and

plead the merits of my Saviour, and live in charity with my neighbours ; for Thou wilt not forgive one in whose breast rankles any evil thought towards others.

Lead me not into temptation, that I be overcome by it, but shew me the way to escape, that when the temptation comes I may count it joy, and withstand for Thy Name's sake.

Deliver me from all the powers of evil ; keep me safe under Thy wings against every violence or fraud of the enemy, that no temptation destroy my hopes, or break my strength, or alter my prospect of glory.

All this we beg for the honour of Thy kingdom, and the manifestation of Thy power, and the glory of Thy Name ; and we desire to render this homage and adoration to Thee, the Great, Invisible, Incomprehensible Majesty on High.

What can I desire but I shall find it either implied or expressed in my Saviour's divine prayer ? Ponder it well, O my soul, and as thou lookest upon it, it will expand and shoot forth branches in all directions, each pointing towards heaven. Here is love and high mystery, confession of faith, hopes resting in

heaven; here are petitions for blessings for both body and soul, safeguards against enemies; and here high strains of adoration, and praise, and worship, seem like echoes faintly caught as they ring from the harps which, struck by angelic hands, are ever pouring forth strains of thanksgiving and praise, and remind thee that thou art one of God's own children, that He graciously allows thee to approach Him, and that Thy Saviour Himself has taught thee to pray.

Monday

AFTER FIFTH SUNDAY.

AND, BEHOLD, THERE WAS A MAN NAMED ZACCHÆUS, WHICH
WAS THE CHIEF AMONG THE PUBLICANS, AND HE WAS
RICH. — St. Luke, xix. 2.

LET the beams of Thy Holy Spirit, O
LORD, descending from above, enlighten
and enkindle in me great fervour, holy impor-
tunity, an unwearied industry, that I may serve
Thee and obtain Thy blessing, by the assiduity
and zeal of my religious offices. I ask this for
JESUS CHRIST's sake. *Amen.*

Our blessed LORD is walking towards His
Passion; many things has He done, and many
journies has He performed since the time that
He first set His face to go to Jerusalem.

JESUS now comes to Jericho. He has always
some great work to do. Even now our dear
LORD comes among us — we rarely go to Him;

He visits us—it is all His work ; O that He may draw us after Him !

Zacchæus was a publican, and He was rich ; both are against him, yet nothing hinders God from dealing out His mercies ; no profession is too vile but that, out of so much evil, He can draw the greatest good ; and riches, though they form a usual hindrance, may be made by Him a step from which to enter the kingdom of heaven. Zacchæus is little of stature ; here is another great hindrance to his seeing JESUS ; for behold, the multitude, as usual, throng and press our blessed LORD as He walks through the streets of Jericho. The crowd hides CHRIST from Zacchæus ; but his great desire gives him ingenuity, and he climbs a sycamore tree, from which he can both see and be seen. Here let me pause ; there is much to reflect upon in this one passage. How does the crowd of this world obscure my view of my only hope — JESUS, my Saviour ! The cares of a family come around me, the desire of riches encompasses me, worldly business occupies me — what are these but throngs which obscure my vision of my LORD ? I must copy Zacchæus and climb into some height, or retire from the throng, where, un-

disturbed, I may gaze upon my LORD. I may use different helps. I may see my sycamore tree in different forms, but I must use my own endeavours to make it serve my purpose, for God creates helps, and lets us use them in our own manner. Whoever took the pains to get into this "sycamore" and came down disappointed? JESUS saw Zacchæus; He looked up to him and called him down. O Thou, Who now lookest down upon me from heaven, call me up to Thee, let me hear Thy gracious voice; I am, it is true, small and of no reputation, but look upon me in mercy, for I look up to Thee with faith.

What says our LORD to Zacchæus? "This day I must abide in thy house." O my Saviour, how condescending in Thee to come unto a publican! And yet, Thou dost often knock and offer to come in and sup with me. I know Thy gracious invitations; they are frequent, and, oh! how loving. If I have ever refused Thee admittance, pardon me, gracious LORD, and make me now fit to receive Thee; fit, that is, by love, and by faith, and by Thy own gracious helps, for without Thee I can do, and am, nothing.

O how joyful must Zacchæus be to have Jesus in his house, to entertain Him at his table, to hear His words in his own home ! And yet there are drawbacks in welcoming the most honoured guest ; even our LORD cannot come to us without our having to undergo an internal struggle to cast out all such things as will prevent our soul being a fit habitation for Him ; and, as in the case of Zacchæus, men may scorn, and laugh, and, remembering our former ways, may insinuate that our present religion is only hypocrisy : our LORD sees the heart, He will detect the malice of our enemies, and our own upright intentions.

“Zacchæus stood and said unto the LORD.” In honest integrity, with firm purpose, but with entire humility, we may stand before the LORD ; and to Him we may recount whatever good we have done, because He alone will see that in such a confession lurks no pride or vanity. What is Zacchæus’s habit of life ? Blush, O my soul, as thou seest the good which this publican did with his worldly riches. He gave half of his goods to feed the poor ; and if he did wrong to any man, he restored fourfold. Here is charity by alms deeds, and rectitude by

restitution. Thus may even an unrighteous calling be sanctified; and, remember from this, that no worldly occupation can be unrighteous but in the manner it is exercised. Oh, mercy and justice well repaid! This day is salvation come to this house. What Zacchæus gave to the poor is nothing to what His Saviour gave to him; and He has sought out and saved one who by his calling and by his insignificance, might be supposed, in the eyes of the Jews, to be lost.

O my soul, thy Saviour is even now nigh unto thee; by bringing thee to meditate on Zacchæus, He proves Himself a Saviour at hand. Thou hast but few moments for thy devotion; in that behold the throng which keeps thee from discerning Thy LORD. Thou must "climb,"—retire into thyself; it will not be easier to thee than it was to the elderly Zacchæus to mount the tree, but when thou hast overcome the difficulty, behold thy LORD! O happy sight! How calm, how serene He looks. This of itself infuses peace and calm into thee; but as thou lookest, He turns to thee—oh, how inspiring, how enlivening is that look! then comes the call, the voice; I

come, dear LORD, I come. Oh, joy and happiness unutterable! He deigns to enter under my roof; LORD, I am unworthy; but Thou seest me, how ready, how anxious I am to get myself in order to receive Thee. . But canst thou go on with this parallel? What are thy alms, deeds, where are thy acts of restitution? How, then, canst thou stand before the LORD! How canst thou expect the salvation which He has brought to bestow on thee?

Resolve from this day forward to give according to thy power; if thou hast much, give plentifully; if little, give cheerfully of that little; and make restitution for every offence against thy neighbours; if thou hast wronged him in purse, restore fourfold; if in giving way to thy temper, by asking his forgiveness; if in speaking ill of him, by confessing and repairing the injury in the best way thou canst. In all ways and by all means do well to thy neighbour, and God, for CHRIST's sake, will give thee an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, that passeth not away.

Tuesday

AFTER FIFTH SUNDAY.

THEN TOOK MARY A POUND OF OINTMENT OF SPIKERNARD, VERY COSTLY, AND ANOINTED THE FEET OF JESUS, AND WIPED HIS FEET WITH HER HAIR : AND THE HOUSE WAS FILLED WITH THE ODOUR OF THE OINTMENT.—St. John, xii. 3.

LET the beams of Thy Holy Spirit, O LORD, descending from above, enlighten and enkindle in me great fervour, holy importunity, an unwearied industry, that I may serve Thee and obtain Thy blessing, by the assiduity and zeal of my religious offices. I ask this for JESUS CHRIST's sake. *Amen.*

If I have well considered the story of the life of JESUS, I cannot but see it, all the way, strewn with thorns and sharp pointed stones. And although by the kisses of His feet they became precious and salutary, yet they procured to Him sorrow and uneasiness; "it was meat

and drink to Him to do His Father's will," but it was "bread of affliction, and rivers of tears to drink;" and for these He thirsted like the earth after the cool stream. For so great was His perfection, and so exact the conformity of His will, that, in the election of accidents, He never considered the taste, but the goodness; never distinguished sweet from bitter; but duty and piety always prepared His table. And therefore, now knowing that His time, determined by the FATHER, was nigh, He hastened up to Jerusalem. He went before His disciples, says St. Mark, and they followed Him, trembling and amazed. And yet, before that, even then when His brethren observed He had a design of publication of Himself, He suffered them to go before Him, and went up as it were in secret. For so we are invited to martyrdom and sufferings in a Christian cause by so great an example: the holy JESUS is gone before us, and it were a holy contention to strive whose zeal were forwardest in designs of humiliation and self-denial; but it were also well if, in doing ourselves secular advantage and in promoting our worldly interest, we should follow Him, Who was ever more distant from receiving

honour, than from receiving a painful death. Those affections which dwell in sadness, and are united to grief, and lie at the foot of the Cross, and trace the sad steps of JESUS, have the wisdom of recollection, the tempers of sobriety, and are the best imitations of JESUS, and securities against the levities of a wandering and a vain spirit.

From the house of Zacchæus let me follow my LORD on His way to Jerusalem, where He stops at Bethany. There, in the house of Simon the leper, a supper was made ready; it was the usual entertainment given when the Paschal Lamb was brought in, preparatory to the Passover. Here came the True Paschal Lamb, ready to be offered, and, with meek humility, sat at table with the rest of the guests. But there was one present whose faith and love saw that He was not as other men, and she sought to offer to Him a distinction which she knew to be His by right, and yet knew not how highly, and truly, and mystically, it was due to Him. She brought a box of ointment, of the most costly description, and she poured out the whole upon the head and feet of her LORD, and wiped His feet with her hair. The perfume

filled the whole house. Yea, it does indeed fill the whole of the LORD's house, even the Church. Many have been the righteous men, high and lofty have been the deeds which have been wrought, since that day ; but heroes have crumbled into dust, mighty deeds have been forgotten, whole nations and languages have passed along and fallen into unfathomable eternity ; but this deed, performed by a poor woman, in a house in an obscure village, sheds as sweet a perfume now as it did eighteen hundred years ago ! What a noble reward to thy love and devotion, O Mary, to be permitted to anoint thy LORD's Body for His burial ! Well mayest thou bend down over those blessed feet, and wipe them with that which is thy greatest glory, even the modest covering given thee by God. Stoop low ; thou wilt never have another occasion of embracing the feet which now are so devoutly pressed by thee ; and if thy love has awakened some presage that what thou art doing now is preparatory to the death of thy beloved LORD, thou wilt wish that this last token of affection had been ten times more costly, and more worthy of His acceptance.

Behold now the Anointed of God sitting in

the house of a leper, at table with one He had raised from the dead. Thus they who are cleansed from sin, and those who are raised to newness of life through CHRIST, sit with Him eating and drinking in His kingdom, in a house filled with the odour of His death.

The anointing of CHRIST was a great and symbolical action ; by it He was, as it were, pointed out and set apart as the Holy One of God, prepared for the great sacrifice He was about to offer. He was shewn forth as the King, anointed with the oil of gladness, and He will henceforth ride on, because of the word of truth, of meekness, and righteousness ; and truly His right hand did teach Him terrible things.

But what a remarkable part is Mary's in this transaction ! Her love and devotion prompted her to an action, of the mysterious sublimity of whose meaning she had no idea. And here I must take example ; let me dwell in the house of obedience, and with the precious ointment of acts of charity, such as will be to me very costly, let me anoint my LORD's feet ; my greatest glory must be to use even the very hairs of my head in His service. Oh, may the

fragrance of any deed of mine reach unto heaven? I can hardly hope it; but I must act with Mary, and my deeds may tend higher than I am aware. And now, my soul, observe the different uses to which God directs the employment of riches. Zacchæus spent half his goods upon the poor; Mary spent three hundred pence in costly ointment. The disciples found fault with her; for they saw not the use of wasting ointment in an idle ceremony, when there were so many poor who would have been glad of the money. But our LORD declares that she had done a good work, and that she was not to be blamed, for the poor would remain, when He would be no longer with them.

Thou must therefore observe that there are actions done for the glory of God, and to which love and devotion prompt good Christians, which are not to be thought ill of because no evident good comes from them. But if some spend their costly offerings upon the external service of God, let not those find fault who would give their money to feed the poor; much less may it, like Judas, be a cloak for covetousness; for money saved from the embalming of our precious Saviour, is little likely

to be bestowed upon the poor, who are His representatives.

O my Saviour, I humbly desire to approach Thee with the precious ointment of prayer and praises, of charity and alms deeds. I beseech Thee to give me grace at this season, that I may anoint Thy feet with these my poor offerings. And, O LORD, I bend low before Thee; all Thy past mercies rush before my mind; I cannot express my love and gratitude, but my best things are Thine; poor, indeed, and utterly unworthy of Thee, still they are my best, my all; take them, and take me, O my Saviour, and make me Thine for ever.

Wednesday

AFTER FIFTH SUNDAY.

TELL YE THE DAUGHTER OF SION, BEHOLD, THY KING
COMETH UNTO THEE, MEEK, AND SITTING UPON AN
ASS, AND A COLT THE FOAL OF AN ASS. —
St. Matt. xxi. 5.

LET the beams of Thy Holy Spirit, O
LORD, descending from above, enlighten
and enkindle in me great fervour, holy impor-
tunity, and unwearied industry, that I may
serve Thee and obtain Thy blessing, by the
assiduity and zeal of my religious offices. I
ask this for JESUS CHRIST's sake. *Amen.*

Our LORD now prepares to enter into Jerusa-
lem; it is very remarkable that He, Who before
concealed Himself from observation, now begins
to act in a different manner. He sat openly at
table with one on whom He had wrought a great
miracle, and He sought not to elude the obser-

vation which it naturally excited. He sends two of His disciples to bring Him an ass; He describes the place where it will be found, and the person by whom it will be lent. Thus did our blessed LORD prepare to make His kingly entry into His own city; He chose not the horse to make His appearance on; that animal is always mentioned in Scripture as ministering to the pride and pomp of earthly triumphs; the King of heaven chose the ass, an emblem of patient suffering and humility; and, thus mounted, He proceeded towards the fair city which He loved, and which was the joy and pride of all the earth.

How different was this triumph from anything worldly: here is no gold, no glittering apparel; here are no prancing steeds and rolling chariots, no bowing courtiers and splendid attendants; One Man, of meek aspect and lowly demeanour, rides upon an ass's colt, with no furniture but the cloaks of some of His attendants spread upon its back — no courtly array, but a multitude who go before and follow after Him, having palm branches in their hands, and crying out, "Hosanna!"

This seems but a mean triumph on first

Wednesday after Fifth Sunday. 193

observation ; but, in gazing on the scene, I am like the disciples, who understood not these things at first ; but as I follow with the multitude, I see the meek King rising into an inconceivable majesty of demeanour ; there is that about Him, which, with all the meekness and humility of His behaviour, and all the simplicity of His garb, shines out with greater lustre than the brightness of jewelled pomp. What is the lustre which surrounds the Man ? It is the brightness of heaven itself, brought down by thousands of angels who surround their King, and, in shining ranks, attend Him on His march. It is the glory of our God, which cannot be concealed from the faithful eye. Fear not, daughter of Sion ; behold, Thy King cometh, sitting upon an ass's colt. The multitudes who came from Jerusalem bearing palms were in a state of high enthusiasm ; their branches betokened peace and happiness, and He was come to offer them true peace and everlasting happiness. He was going to pay the price for them. And they cried, Hosanna, blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the LORD, hosanna in the highest. Little did they think of the full import of what they uttered ;

in the highest heaven alone was glory duly given on that day, so that had it not found some feeble echo from men, the stones must have given back the sound.

Heaven and earth are now about to be joined together; when He was born, angels sang, "Glory;" now He is about to return to His heavenly Jerusalem, mortal men respond and take up the strain.

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Sion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold, thy King cometh unto thee; He is just and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.

This is the gate of the LORD, the righteous shall enter into it.

I will thank Thee for Thou hast heard me; and art become my Salvation.

The same stone which the builders rejected is become the head stone in the corner. This is the LORD's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.

This is the day which the LORD has made, we will rejoice and be glad in it.

Help me now, O LORD; O LORD, send me now prosperity.

Blessed be He that cometh in the Name of the LORD; we have wished you good luck, ye that are of the house of the LORD.

With this humble pomp and just acclamation did our LORD pass on: He descends the brow of Mount Olivet, and comes in full view of Jerusalem. All the people are rejoicing around Him; but behold, He weeps! He weeps for those who are now in joy, and for all those in that city who were living in utter disregard of their present condition: If thou hadst known, says our LORD in His deep tenderness, even thou in this thy day, the things that belong unto thy peace; but now are they hid from thine eyes. How He loves His own! O may we feel for ourselves as He feels for us! May we weep for our sins, that He may rejoice in those penitential tears, and save us from the consequences of our sins.

And now, O LORD, I pray Thee, in Thy infinite condescension, vouchsafe to come into Thy own temple, even my soul. Enter, O LORD, and reign there as King and Supreme Ruler over my whole self. Behold, I place for Thy use every covering and garment I possess; I desire nothing for myself, but would lay all

at Thy feet; I would strew Thy way with my prayers, and my alms deeds, and my devotions. I cry, Hosanna! Save, I beseech Thee, O save me, my God, my King; all that is within me acknowledges Thee to be the LORD; every faculty of body and mind, every motion of the will, every effort of the understanding, every impulse, every motion, every sensation, cries out, Hosanna, LORD, save me; and O grant, of Thy infinite mercy, that the voice which cries "Hosanna" to-day, may not exclaim "Crucify Him" to-morrow.

O holy King of Sion, eternal JESUS, Who, with great humility and infinite love, didst enter into the holy city riding upon an ass, that Thou mightest verify the predictions of the prophets, and give an example of meekness and of the gentle paternal government which the eternal FATHER laid upon Thy shoulders, be pleased, dearest LORD, to enter into my soul with triumph, trampling over all Thine enemies; and give me grace to entertain Thee with joy and adoration; and, divesting myself of all my desires, let me lay them at Thy feet, that I may bear the yoke and burden of the LORD with alacrity, with love, and the wonders

Wednesday after Fifth Sunday. 197

of a satisfied and triumphant spirit. LORD, enter in and take possession. Let me strew Thy way with flowers of virtue and Christian graces; let me triumph, by Thy aid and example, over my infirmities, and then lay my victories at Thy feet, and at last follow Thee into the heavenly Jerusalem, with palms in my hands and joy in my heart, rejoicing in Thee, and singing hallelujahs in a happy eternity to Thee, O holy King of Sion, eternal JESUS.
Amen.



Thursday**AFTER FIFTH SUNDAY.**

AND WHEN HE SAW A FIG TREE IN THE WAY, HE CAME TO IT, AND FOUND NOTHING THEREON, BUT LEAVES ONLY, AND SAID UNTO IT, LET NO FRUIT GROW ON THEE HENCE-FORWARD FOR EVER. AND PRESENTLY THE FIG TREE WITHERED AWAY. — St. Matt. xxi. 19.

LET the bright beams of Thy Holy Spirit, O LORD, descending from above, enlighten and enkindle in me great fervour, holy importunity, and unwearied industry, that I may serve Thee and obtain Thy blessing, by the assiduity and zeal of my religious offices. I ask this for JESUS CHRIST's sake. *Amen.*

Our blessed LORD did not remain in Jerusalem the night on which He made His triumphal entry; He was despised and rejected of man, and in Jerusalem He had not where to lay His head. He therefore returned to Bethany, to the house of those who were honoured

by being His friends, though it is probable that at that time they were reviled and scorned for harbouring One Whose life was sought by the chief men in Jerusalem, and Who was counted vile among men. Let us never forget to discharge the duties of hospitality, for in so doing some have entertained angels unawares; and even now, though our dear LORD Himself no longer goes among men poor and despised, yet, in humble garb, and without any outward show of holiness, some of His saints still are among us; and how happy shall we be, if, when they are called up to the highest room, we may feel that in our turn we have discharged towards them acts of kindness and sympathy, for the love of our dearest Master, when as yet we knew nothing of their exalted rank.

In the morning our LORD returned towards Jerusalem; it is said that He hungered, and seeing a fig tree, He stepped out of His path and went up to it. No doubt the disciples wondered at what He was about to do, for the time of figs was not come, and there was nothing on the tree but leaves. But He, Whose love never slept, was thinking of the instruction and encouragement of His disciples, and

of us also, if we will but attentively consider His actions.

Finding the fig tree without fruit, barren and unprofitable, He said, "Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever;" and St. Matthew adds, "presently the fig tree withered away;" but it appears that the disciples did not perceive that the curse had taken effect until their return in the evening, when they saw that the fig tree had withered away.

All this could not have happened without some great and hidden reason. JESUS was proceeding to Jerusalem and the Temple; to complete His ministry before His Passion; all that was in His mind must have been beyond the power of His disciples to comprehend; no words could have explained His mighty thoughts and plans for the good of His own people; He did then as He still does; He used the language of nature, which preaching silently would only convey by little and little its meaning to the mind. It is but gradually that I begin to see in this tree the type of that which He had before spoken of in parable, as, having dressed it and watered it, and if it brought forth no fruit, it was to be cut down.

This is the tree at the root of which the axe was laid, to be cut down if it proved barren; and truly, if its luxuriant leaves gave promise of much and vigorous fruit, it was a fitting type of a people who so scrupulously observed rites and ordinances, and omitted the weightier matters of the Law, the fruits of those observances. How often were the chosen people compared to figs; how often is the tree and the branches thereof brought forward as types of the vigour, or of the decay, of the whole nation! Now the time of their probation was fast wearing away; the last words were about to be said; the hand was uplifted, the axe raised, and the disciples were to receive warning and comfort from the miracle; warning, that they must bring forth fruit and not spend themselves in empty profession; comfort, because He, Who could thus shew His power, might have exterminated those who were about to crucify Him.

And now, my soul, take this mysterious action of thy Saviour, and bring out of it something for thy own special instruction. Regard thyself as a tree planted, nourished, and watched by thy Heavenly Father; JESUS CHRIST is

to come and see whether, after all the careful teaching, thou art bringing forth the fruit of holiness and pureness of living; or it may be thou art placed under circumstances of trial and temptation; those circumstances shew whether or not thou hast profited by the divine instructions thou hast received; JESUS hungers after thy fruit—see the compassion, the love, the interest He takes in thee! He comes unto thee, but if thou hast brought forth leaves only, hear the fearful sentence pronounced on thee; thy time of probation is over, thou hast no fruit; “Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever.” Oh, fearful curse of the unprofitable servant!

Resolve, O my soul, diligently to cultivate the talents which are committed unto thee; let thy delight be in the law of the LORD; exercise thyself in it day and night; then shalt thou be as a tree planted by the water side, that will bring forth his fruit in due season. Thy leaf also shall not wither; and look, whatsoever thou doest it shall prosper.

Friday

AFTER FIFTH SUNDAY.

AND THEY CAME TO JERUSALEM : AND JESUS WENT INTO THE TEMPLE, AND BEGAN TO CAST OUT THEM THAT SOLD AND BOUGHT IN THE TEMPLE, AND OVERTHREW THE TABLES OF THE MONEYCHANGERS, AND THE SEATS OF THEM THAT SOLD DOVES. — St. Mark, xi. 15.

LET the beams of Thy Holy Spirit, O LORD, descending from above, enlighten and enkindle in me great fervour, holy importunity, and unwearied industry, that I may serve Thee and obtain Thy blessing, by the assiduity and zeal of my religious offices. I ask this for JESUS CHRIST's sake. *Amen.*


Our LORD again entered the Temple, and there a sight met His eyes which had not been there on the preceding evening. A throng of buyers and sellers crowded the court of the Temple; the commodities were not for common

use, but were for the purposes of sacrifice. Many of those who came to Jerusalem to worship came from far, and it was not likely that they could bring bullocks or goats, or any of the necessities for sacrifice with them; the priests therefore facilitated the acquisition of these things, and, it is thought, profited themselves by allowing them to be sold close to the altar. When the LORD saw this profanation, He was filled with holy indignation. He holds no measures with the sacrilegious persons, but with a scourge He drives them out of the Temple.

I see in this action of our blessed LORD's, not only just punishment and righteous judgment upon persons guilty of gross profanation, and abuse of God's holy house, but a representation and type of what was about to happen to the Jews as a nation—it was foretold by the prophet. Oh, why did they not see? How was it that they did not understand when such words as these were in their written law :

“Is this house, which is called by My Name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, even I have seen it, saith the Lord.

“But go ye now unto My place, which was



in Shiloh, where I set My Name at the first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of my people Israel.

“And I will cast you out of My sight, as I have cast out all your brethren, even the whole seed of Ephraim.”

How, then, can I doubt that this action was significative of the work which our Lord was about to perform, that is, to cast out the Jews, who had set up an unholy traffic, utterly to cast them out, and to purify His Church.

What an awful sight it must have been to the offenders to have seen such anger and such vigour from so humble a Man! Is this that mild and gentle Saviour that came to take on Him our stripes, and to undergo the chastisement of our peace? Is this that quiet Lamb which, before His shearers, openeth not His mouth? See how His eyes sparkle with holy anger, and dart forth beams of indignation in the faces of the impious traffickers. Yea, it becomes Thee, O gracious Redeemer of men, to let the world see Thou hast not lost Thy justice in Thy mercy, that there is not more lenity in Thy forbearance than rigour in Thy just severity.

What a miracle is this! Here is a Man denounced, set at nought, a price given for Him, yet entering the Temple, and, with no help from authority or force, driving a whole crowd from the Temple, and preventing persons from exercising an employment which, as it was gainful, it was likely they would defend with some assurance. There must have been something terrible and fiery in the eyes—some rays of the Godhead emanating from the person of Him Who was invested with such terrors. How unlike the appearance of the Saviour! how like the aspect of the Judge! This brings the Crucifixion and the Judgment very awfully together, and makes me think that the “purging of the Temple” must go on, if I would be fit to meet Him Who I believe will come to be our Judge.

And now, with respect to myself, who am a temple of God; what is to be my course? Do I set up an unholy traffic within me? Have I forgotten that this body of mine was sanctified and set apart for the service of God? and am I not afraid when I look upon the life which I lead? Forgetful of my dedication, forgetful of my destination, I live as if this life were alone

the end and object of all my actions. I am quite engrossed by the care of appearing like other people, and keeping up the manners of the world with others. How often do I think more of my external appearance than of my internal preparation for the service of God? What is all this but desecrating the holy temple of God? that which ought to be entirely given up to His service, and in which the business of the world ought to be carried on, not as an end or an all-engrossing subject of pursuit, but as a duty to which God's providence has appointed me, and which I pursue solely as His will. O Saviour, drive away all cares, all pursuits, all thoughts, all wishes, which are contrary to the sanctity of Thy dwelling. Thou abhorrest such sacrilege. O make me to abhor it, so that I use every endeavour to purify this Thy temple; and if I am so purified, then shall I be fit to appear in Thine house, there to celebrate Thy praise, and to offer unto Thee adoration and worship for the manifold mercies Thou hast bestowed upon me.

O Thou, Who wilt suddenly come to Thy Temple, grant unto me such a share of Thy

holy discipline now, that I may abide the day of Thy coming. O be Thou as a refiner's fire to me; purge away all within me that is displeasing unto Thee; and grant that in the day when Thou makest up Thy jewels, Thou wilt spare me as Thine own son, whom Thou hast chastened and corrected in mercy, and hast reckoned as one of Thy children for ever.

Saturday

AFTER FIFTH SUNDAY.

AND IN THE DAY TIME HE WAS TEACHING IN THE TEMPLE;
AND AT NIGHT HE WENT OUT, AND ABODE IN THE MOUNT
THAT IS CALLED THE MOUNT OF OLIVES.—

St. Luke, xxi. 37.

LET the bright beams of Thy Holy Spirit,
O LORD, descending from above, enlighten
and enkindle in me great fervour, holy impor-
tunity, and unwearied industry, that I may
serve Thee and obtain Thy blessing, by the
assiduity and zeal of my religious offices. I
ask this for JESUS CHRIST's sake. *Amen.*

When I see a person occupied in the business of his vocation, and know that it will be the last time he will be so employed, how affecting is it to witness the energy bestowed upon the work. When a dear friend is dead, and on looking over his papers, if we find wri-

tings which occupied some of the last hours of his existence, the words they contain assume an almost sacred character; and their warnings and admonitions are doubly impressive, their exhortations doubly binding. How much more than human words—how much greater than human love—have I now to think upon! I have now, though most imperfectly, followed my dearest LORD through the course of His ministry. If the considerations have not kindled my love and raised my devotions, quickened my hope and created in me great zeal and great fervour, I must consider my heart to be hardened, my eyes to be blind. But I *have* a more earnest desire to serve my God; my love is stronger, my faith is firmer; still they only shew me how weak I am, how feeble are all my efforts; they only shew me how much I stand in need of the sacrifice and intercession of my Saviour. I am now going to enter upon the consideration of the last sayings and doing of that Saviour: the last days of His ministry are invested with a deep and melancholy interest, and with a sacred importance, which makes me enter upon their consideration with feelings of misgiving. I fear that I can

hardly draw out all the instruction which they are intended to convey; but I will read attentively and prayerfully the sacred history, and trust in God to send down into my heart such rays of light as will make it profitable for me.

When our LORD had cleared the Temple, He sat down and taught; and the people were exceedingly astonished at Him. And well might they be astonished, for He taught with an awful authority which they could not withstand; they could not but acknowledge in their own minds that He was invested with some supernatural power, but still they saw the chief priests and the scribes plotting against Him, and they must have been perplexed and divided.

When the day was over He went out of the city, and must have gone to Bethany, for here it was that the disciples remarked the destruction of the fig tree, and here our LORD took occasion to discourse to them of the power of faith. Read over this passage, and mark the high efficacy of faithful prayer, and resolve to cultivate the spirit of prayer and supplication, which will remove from our Christian course all those difficulties which at first sight appear of the size of mountains.

On His return to the Temple, the chief priests and scribes questioned Him as to the authority by which He did all His works. He, knowing that to preach to the hardened Pharisees would be worse than useless, answered them by asking another question on John's baptism; and they not being able to answer Him, received no reply to their ensnaring demand.

He then spoke to them in parables; and told of the father and his two sons, and the husbandmen and the vineyard: which last He intends to set forth the events which had occurred, and which were going to happen; for He veils His instruction in parables, in order that they may not guess His meaning until He Himself points out the application, which they will not be able to withstand. Then He speaks of Himself as the Stone rejected of the builders; and when the chief priests and Pharisees heard it, and knew that it was meant of them, they sought to lay hands on Him, but they could not, for they feared the people, who all took Him for a prophet; so they left Him and departed.

Now, as the audience is changed and none

but disciples and those who were eager to hear Him were near Him, He changes His plan of discourse, and pronounces the parable of the marriage feast; which is a wonderful discourse on the persons who would not be the Lord's guests, and those who were willing to assist at the feast but would not make the necessary preparations.

But I cannot go on and run through in a hasty manner the divine words then spoken — each sentence contains a sermon, and I must ponder them in my retirement, and endeavour by meditating on them to draw myself nearer to my Lord, and to be with Him more closely during the awful time of His Passion. There is still the question of the tribute to Cæsar; the discourse on the Resurrection; on the greatest commandment; the question about the Son of David; the warning against the scribes; the history of the poor widow. Then comes the discourse on the destruction of Jerusalem; the sufferings of the disciples; the coming of anti-christ; the coming of the Son of Man. Then is pronounced the parable of the ten virgins; that of the talents; and now, alas! we are coming to the close of His teaching, we are going to

see Him suffer : but, behold, He speaks of His glory ! He speaks of the day of final retribution ; of the division of the sheep from the goats !

O gracious Saviour, Thou gavest us this the last, that when Thou art in the hands of Thy enemies in apparent misfortune, we may remember that the day of Thy power is coming, and the day of Thy glory will not tarry !

Let me say over these awful words ; let me hear Thee pronouncing them. Thou art still in the garb of Thy humility, but Thy words are divine, they are winged with fire ; they pierce, they penetrate into the inmost soul :

“ When the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory :

And before Him shall be gathered all nations : and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats :

And He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left.

Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world :

Saturday after Fifth Sunday. 215

For I was an hungred, and ye gave Me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took Me in:

Naked, and ye clothed Me: I was sick, and ye visited Me: I was in prison, and ye came unto Me.

Then shall the righteous answer Him, saying, LORD, when saw we Thee an hungred, and fed Thee? or thirsty, and gave Thee drink?

When saw we Thee a stranger, and took Thee in? or naked, and clothed Thee?

Or when saw we Thee sick, or in prison, and came unto Thee?

And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me.

Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

For I was an hungred, and ye gave Me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me no drink:

I was a stranger, and ye took Me not in: naked, and ye clothed Me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited Me not.

Then shall they also answer Him, saying, **LORD**, when saw we Thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto Thee?

Then shall He answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to Me.

And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."

LORD, in that dreadful day, place me at Thy right hand, among Thy chosen sheep: Thou hast prepared Thy kingdom, O make me fit to enter into Thine inheritance; and that I may be admitted to Thy eternal joys hereafter, grant that I may shew mercy upon those whom Thou hast sent as Thy representatives—the hungry, the thirsty, the sick, the stranger, the naked, the prisoner. O let me see in these Thy divine image; in their crosses let me distinguish Thine; and then call me up to Thee, O **LORD**, and place me near Thee, where Thou reignest for ever.

And now I have passed over hastily and most imperfectly the events of these great days. I have seen the King enter into His

in Jerusalem: I have been with Him in the temple, and at last He has shewn me the close of all—the Day of Judgment in all its horrors and majesty. In all this I have witnessed the representations and types of His dispensation in His visible kingdom. I am now about to go up higher, and see the marriage supper of the Lamb, “for after two days the feast of the Passover.”

The Sunday next before Easter.

NOW BEFORE THE FEAST OF THE PASSOVER, WHEN JESUS KNEW THAT HIS HOUR WAS COME THAT HE SHOULD DEPART OUT OF THIS WORLD UNTO THE FATHER, HAVING LOVED HIS OWN WHICH WERE IN THE WORLD, HE LOVED THEM UNTO THE END.—St. John, xiii. 1.

O THOU, Who, girded with a towel, didst wash the feet of Thy disciples, wash out, I beseech Thee, the spots of my soul, and gird me with a spiritual bond, for Thy Name's sake.

Behold, the first day of unleavened bread is come, and the disciples ask their dear LORD and beloved Master, "Where wilt Thou that we go and prepare that Thou mayest eat the passover?"

The LORD gave them a sign by which they might discover the man at whose house He designed to partake of His last supper; and they went and found as He had told them. The

room must have been large to contain so many as thirteen guests ; and, as it was furnished, I may suppose it to have belonged to one who was not in poverty, and it may have been well decorated, and fit for so great and solemn an occasion. When the hour was come, He sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him, and He said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer ; for I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this and divide it among yourselves ; for I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come.

Pause ; and consider well this scene. Behold our LORD sitting at the table ; near Him is the young and loving John ; Peter is next, his whole soul fixed in wondering contemplation of his LORD ; there is Andrew the obedient, and the doubting Thomas ; there is James and Matthew, Philip and Bartholomew, the other James, Simon the Zealot, and Jude ; and there is the traitor Judas, with dark and scowling brow, every action and every word sears and

hardens his heart, while it inflames and raises those of the innocent and the faithful. There are those chosen few, with loins girt, and pale and anxious faces, for they expect an awful summons; like their forefathers of old, they are eating in haste, but they look round, and with Isaac they say, "Where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" They look round with trembling: not yet, O ye faithful Israelites, is the blood of the true sprinkling shed!

And now behold our LORD; He rises from supper; He, Who came from God and went to God, yet did not disdain to act towards His creatures as a servant, He laid aside His garment, and took a towel and girded Himself; He, Who was in the form of God, took upon Him the form of a servant; He emptied Himself and He poured water into a basin — even as He poured out His blood to wash out the filth of sin. Behold, how He bends over their feet, how humble is His attitude! He stoops; yea, gracious LORD, whatever Thou dost for Thy unworthy creatures, Thou must stoop to. There never was such an instance of humility: Abraham did not take that office on himself, but commanded his guests to wash their feet;

and likewise Joseph deputed the steward of his house to wash the feet of his brethren; but He Who was meek and lowly of heart, Himself stoops to this lowest office, and He commands us to learn of Him. Let me, after Thy example, O blessed LORD, be ready to do the lowest offices of kindness in Thy family; and as Thou hast promised to exalt those who humble themselves, let me have the high privilege of walking after Thy pattern, and of resting with Thee in Thy kingdom in heaven. But when our Lord cometh to Simon Peter, he, abashed and confounded at the condescension and self-abasement of his dear Master, recoiled, as those sacred hands approached to his feet: "LORD, dost Thou wash my feet?" "What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter."

Peter saith unto Him, "Thou shalt never wash my feet." Here is Peter's usual hasty zeal, and in the answer, our LORD's ever tender rebuke: "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part in Me." True, O blessed Saviour, unless Thou cleanseest me from my sin, I cannot be clean; Thine is the only purification. O wash me, sanctify me, and let me no longer run after

the pollutions of the world. Here again is Simon's over anxious zeal: "LORD, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." JESUS answered and said, "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit." Yea, truly, we are all washed in baptism, and are made clean; but in treading the earth, and living in the world, our feet contract the dust and soil of that on which we tread, and by which we pass; we thus stand in constant need of washing; daily and hourly do we need this great condescension of our dearest LORD; let me never cease to take heed to my ways according to His word.


O merciful Saviour, Who didst eat the paschal lamb with Thy disciples, and, giving them an example of humility, upon Thy knees didst wash their feet, grant that this example may take deep impression in me; give me perfect humility, true obedience, and fervent love, whereby I may love Thee sincerely and all others unfeignedly.

[In this place the meditation may be broken off. Read slowly and solemnly from the 11th to the 30th verse of the 13th chapter of St. John's Gospel, and resume the meditation.]

Now, my soul, approach, and observe attentively thy Saviour's actions. Behold, He takes bread; they are watching Him with anxiety and deep attention; His manner is more than usually solemn as He breaks the bread; He gives it to them, and tells them it is His Body — that Body which is broken for the redemption of man, and for the salvation of the world. The disciples eat, and they marvel at the great mystery. "This is My Body;" here is a positive assertion: "Do this in remembrance of me;" here is a direct command. Let me take these words; and in whatsoever sense CHRIST intended that they should be taken, so let my faith accept them: I see and feel that it is bread; but I also hear and believe the words of my Saviour, that, in some mysterious and hidden way, it is His Body. This is that Bread Which came down from heaven, and Which giveth life to the world. O my soul, adore and wonder, with angels and all the company of heaven, that the SON of GOD should become food for the souls of His servants; that He, Who hath essential felicity, should become miserable, and die for thee, and then give Himself to thee for ever, to redeem thee from sin and misery.

But observe again. He takes the cup; He holds it, and lifts His eyes to heaven; He gives thanks; He gives it to the disciples, and they all drink of it. What says He? "This is My Blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me." Oh, wonderful announcement! It is the Blood of the New Testament! The ratification and consignation of the Testament is Blood: in this cup, therefore, is the covenant sealed anew; we are again reconciled to God; and we are to drink it in remembrance of our Redeemer, and to shew forth His death, that which purchased this ratification, until His coming again. With what awe must the disciples have partaken of that cup of blessing! There they saw their LORD sitting with them, and yet He gave them His Blood to drink. What an awful mystery! And how does it continue a mystery to us! CHRIST is present with us in the Holy Eucharist; yet His Body is in heaven. O God, how wonderful art Thou! let me not question, but adore.

Our LORD tells His disciples that He will no more drink of the fruit of the vine until that



day when He shall drink it new in the kingdom of heaven. Here is some allusion to what is to happen; a blessed and happy consummation, when old things shall be done away, and all things shall be new. This may be an allusion to the marriage supper of the Lamb; and happy and refreshing must it have been to the anxious disciples to hear of the consummation of all their hopes: happy and refreshing is it to us, who are struggling amid the careless and the unfaithful, where God's holy Church is abused and desecrated, and all things appear to bear nothing but the taint and semblance of their mortality, to hear that a day will come when the bride will make herself ready; and to her will be granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints. Oh, blessed will they be who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb.

Thou oughtest to beware, my soul, of anxious and unprofitable searching into this blessed sacrament. It is a blessed simplicity to leave the difficult way of questions and disputings, and go on forward in the plain truth of God's commandments. Faith is required of thee, and

a life sincerely devoted to the service of God ; this is all ; for God walketh with the simple, revealeth Himself to the humble, giveth understanding to the little ones, openeth the sense to pure minds, and hideth grace from the curious and proud.

What thanks, gracious LORD, can I return Thee for these wonders of love which Thou hast showed me, a wretched sinner ; which those blessed angels above, who never sinned, so diligently attend, and so much admire ?

A feast, where Thy all-glorious Self is given to the meanest, if truly prepared, guest.

A feast of peace and love, and incomparable sweetness, to which Thine own blessed mouth thus calleth us :

“Come unto Me, all ye that labour for holiness, and are oppressed under the weight of your sins.

“Come unto Me, ye that hunger after heaven, and thirst to drink at the fountain of bliss.

“Come unto Me, and I will refresh you with the wine of gladness and the bread of life.”

It was for our sakes that Thou didst appoint a commemorative sacrifice, of that one oblation of Thyself once offered upon the Cross ; and

Sunday next before Easter. 227

bread and wine so offered and blessed, as symbols of Thy Body and Blood.

Blessed are the eyes that see Thee, O JESUS, in these holy signs, and blessed is the mouth that reverently receives Thee !

Blessed yet more is the heart that desires Thy coming, O Thou eternal LORD of grace and glory, our joy and portion in the land of the living !


Monday

BEFORE EASTER.

THEN COMETH JESUS WITH THEM UNTO A PLACE CALLED
GETHESEMANE, AND SAITH UNTO THE DISCIPLES, SIT YE
HERE, WHILE I GO AND PRAY YONDER. — St. Matthew,
xxvi. 36.

O HOLY JESUS, make me by Thy example to conform to the will of that eternal God, Who is our Father, merciful and gracious ; that I may choose all those accidents which His providence has actually disposed to me ; that I may know no desires but His commands and His will ; and that in all afflictions I may fly thither for mercy, pardon, and support. Holy Jesus, give me the gift and spirit of prayer, and by Thy gracious intercession supply my ignorance and imperfection, and give me such supplies of grace as Thou lovest to bestow upon Thy saints and servants. *Amen.*

After the Eucharistic supper, our Lord spoke



words of preparation and comfort to the apostles; He predicted to them their cowardice, and Peter was especially warned of his approaching defection: they were full of protestations of courage and fidelity; but alas! how little do we know ourselves; how little can we rely upon resolutions formed in our quiet moments, when danger and adversity are around us! Before leaving the room, they sang a hymn; with hearts full of heaviness they sang a song of joy; but that hymn may have inspired the apostles with strength, and He would see their hearts, and rejoice to observe them swelling with thankfulness to Him "Who is gracious, and Whose mercy endureth for ever."

They then went out: I may picture to myself the group as they issue from the gate of the city with slow steps, talking as they go, and passing over the brook Cedron; I may observe them mounting the somewhat steep ascent of the Mount Olivet; they pass; they enter a garden; here they pause: see our Lord turning to the group; He bids them sit there, while He retires to pray; this may have been His usual custom, because He was wont to retire to the Mount of Olives for the purposes of prayer.


He takes Peter, James, and John with Him; the three who had witnessed His glory, are now going with Him, but to how different a place to Tabor ! Even as different as His present humiliation is from His surpassing glory then. Behold them as they pass on into the deepening shade of the thick trees. Our Lord pauses ; He begins to be sorrowful and very heavy ; He says to the three, " My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death ; tarry ye here and watch with Me." Not until now did He begin to be sorrowful ; He began when He pleased ; and it now pleased Him to take upon Him our sorrows, and suffer the pangs first in His righteous soul, which will afterwards extend to His human body. But, my soul, hast thou known what it is to be sorrowful ? hast thou ever been wrung with remorse, or weighed down by accumulated misfortunes ? Hast thou seen thy best beloved treading in the paths of sin, and walking on to sure destruction ? Call to mind the anguish which has wrung bitter tears from thy eyes, and mourn over these words, spoken by the loving, meek, innocent Saviour, " My soul is exceeding sorrowful." .

He goes from them a few paces ; behold Him

as He kneels down: "Father!" — that word brings down into His soul a rush and tumult of sorrow, and He falls prostrate on the ground. He sees the whole world's disobedience; every one, in some way or other, acts as a disobedient son to that loving Father; and the whole weight of that mighty transgression presses and crushes into the only soul that was sinless — "If it be possible, let this cup pass from Me." He said this, urged by the human will which would avoid, if possible, such intensity of anguish; but the divine will in Him desired the accomplishment of His purpose, for He said: "Nevertheless, not My [human] will, but Thine [the divine will] be done." Having ended this prayer, I may see Him approaching His disciples, and He findeth them asleep, and awakens them, and gives them the command to "watch and pray," that is, to be vigilant in the custody of their senses, and observant of every accident, and to pray that they may be strengthened against all assaults of their spiritual enemies, and of temptation. He then returns to prayer: again He finds the disciples asleep. The third time He prays, and His agony increases: behold how his whole frame quivers with intensity

of anguish! the great drops hang round His brow; and now, from the travail of His soul, the blood gushes from every pore, and runs down to the ground. Is this to redeem the very earth from its curse in the first Adam—is this to wash out the blood stains of the righteous Abel, that the Saviour rains down blood from His holy head, like the drops that water the earth? An angel comes to comfort Him; oh! blessed angel, come upon an errand of mercy! An angel before came, when He was in a great straight; and now he comes to alleviate the sufferings of the Most Holy and Most Innocent, by bringing a message from heaven. He returns to the disciples and finds them still sleeping, and He disturbs them no more, for their watch is over: the time is past; and He rouses them to take part in a far different scene.

O my Saviour, what a sad, what an afflicting scene is this! to see Thy most holy, most innocent soul thus tortured! To see Thee thus is most heart-rending; but why art Thou thus? When I answer, It was for thy sins, for thy follies and levities, my soul, that thy Saviour was thus agonized, how can I but prostrate



myself, and weep bitter tears of remorse and penitence. Yes; the weight of all the sins which had been committed, and which were to be committed, came at that time before the spirit of the Saviour of men; and if Thou hast ever felt the heart-aching remorse, and the utter misery, which causes the tears to burst, as it were, from the lowest depths of the heart, upon awaking to the consciousness of one sin, what canst Thou think of that agony which the whole world's transgressions caused to thy LORD and Saviour!

The disciples were told to watch and pray; so am I: they were found asleep in spite of former protestations and resolutions—the flesh got the better, and they slept; so do I: for I am ever acting below my wishes, below my intentions; without directly committing a sin, I am constantly finding that I *cannot* act up to my resolutions. Our blessed LORD saw their weakness, and excused them; but let me never relax in my efforts to watch and pray, for on no other conditions can I hope to escape the temptations which beset me.

There is something in thy Saviour's agony, O my soul, which comes with a still and calm

reproof to thee for almost every action of thy life. What! canst thou see that prostrate Form, and observe the Blood streaming down that agonized face, and still live on in the constant habit of committing little acts of levity and carelessness — of making good resolves and then breaking them? Canst thou be living in constant want of recollection, with this great scene before thee? Oh, endeavour to “watch” with more vigilance, to pray with more earnestness; awake from thy slumbers; look at the reality of thy position; thy sin is pardoned, thy iniquity is covered, if thou canst but watch with thy Saviour, and by thy earnest endeavours obtain for thyself an interest in His intercession.

Oh, merciful Saviour, Who, praying in the garden, didst wholly resign Thyself to Thy Father’s good pleasure, desiring that not Thy will, but His, should be done; grant me grace, that in all adversity and tribulation, I may flee to Thee by prayer, and ever commit myself to Thy providence and good pleasure; and be merciful to me.

Tuesday

BEFORE EASTER.

JUDAS THEN, HAVING RECEIVED A BAND OF MEN AND OFFICERS FROM THE CHIEF PRIESTS AND PHARISEES, COMETH THITHER WITH LANTERNS AND TORCHES AND WEAPONS. — St. John, xviii. 3.

O LORD GOD ALMIGHTY, Who, to redeem lost mankind, didst deliver up Thine Only Son, to be betrayed and sold by one of His own disciples and familiar friends into the hands of His most malicious enemies, Grant me, by the help of Thy Spirit, always to detest and abhor my own sins, which were no less the occasion of His death than the traitor Judas: and mercifully grant that I may never fall from Thee through covetousness or any other temptation, but that I may persevere unto the end, under all trials, in the fellowship of Thy Word and Spirit, through JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD. *Amen.*

Our blessed LORD having awaked His sleep-

ing disciples, and exhorted them to accompany Him, began to move towards the spot where He had left the other apostles; He went to meet His murderers, that it might appear He undertook the Passion with choice and a free election. As they advance through the thick grave shade of the garden, they see a multitude approaching them. The red flare of the torches throws a fierce threatening light around, and discovers the countenances of the wicked crew, who, like ravening wolves, are seeking their prey. Why such a multitude? Why are swords and staves brought in such abundance, to apprehend one man? Was it that they remembered the miracles which He had wrought? or was it that they feared the people?

But, behold, one advances from the crowd; he goes up to our gracious LORD, and saying, "Hail, Master!" kissed Him. Oh, wicked and cruel traitor, dost thou use thy ordinary token of love and kindness to thy Master, as the means of shewing Him to His enemies? What a foul deed is this! and with what serenity does our LORD remark the traitorous act, shewing that His omniscient wisdom sees to the bottom of it,— "Judas, betrayest thou

the Son of Man with a kiss?" "Friend, wherefore art thou come?" "Yea, mine own familiar friend, whom I trusted, *who did also eat of my bread*, hath laid great wait for me." Let me here pause, and mark the heavenly calm of our dearest LORD's conduct. He upbraids not, He threatens not, He alludes to no punishment; but He addresses the traitor with mild words, and calls him "Friend," in tones of affectionate admonition, which, if he had not entirely and irretrievably fallen, might have recalled him to a remembrance of Who it was he was thus betraying. JESUS makes another enquiry, "Whom seek ye?" As soon as they have said "JESUS of Nazareth," and have heard the words, "I AM HE;" they went backward and fell to the ground. There was, in that still small voice, a power greater than the whirlwind; the guards are struck down by the voice and announcement of God; and herein we recognize the words of the prophet, "Therefore My people shall know My Name; therefore they shall know in that day that I am He that doth speak: behold! it is I!"

Observe, when the officers had recovered from their fall, how our LORD at the same time

permits them to take Him, and intercedes for His disciples, that they be allowed to go their ways. Here is the good Shepherd, Who layeth down His life for His sheep, loving His own unto the end, and fulfilling, as St. John adds, the saying which He spake, Of those Thou hast given Me, have I lost none.

So tenderly does our Saviour take care of His own: at the same time leaving all to see the fulfilment of every part of His wonderful saying; for they could not but observe that "son of perdition" busying himself among the soldiers, and consulting how they might best bind and secure Him Who had been betrayed by his foul treachery, but Whose power to loose Himself from them, he must have known; this might have caused all the violence they used towards Him. So Jesus went to them, and they bound Him with cords; and thus began our liberty, and redemption from slavery, and sin, and cursings, and death. But He was bound faster by bonds of His own; His Father's will and mercy, pity of the world, prophecies, and mysteries, and love, held Him fast; and these cords were as "strong as death;" and the cords which the soldiers' malice put upon

His holy hands were but symbols and figures; His own compassion and affection were the true bands. Yet He undertook this short restraint and condition of a prisoner, that all sorts of persecutions and calamities should be hallowed by His having undergone them. And very sorrowful it is to see Him seized upon and roughly treated, — His outer garment stripped off, and His hands strained behind His back, and tied together with a thick and galling cord.

But before those holy hands had lost their liberty, their last action was a miracle and an act of mercy and compassion. Who can blame Peter's zeal, when he saw the rudeness and the insults they put upon his beloved Master? He drew a sword, and smote a servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear. Those blessed hands cured that wound of the hardened and rude servant; He commanded Peter to put up his sword; and, with touching words, shows His resignation to His Father's will, but also His power to resist, if it were good so to do. By these words He might wish to reassure His disciples.

The servant is healed; Jesus is bound; and when the troops began their march towards the

city, the disciples forsook Him and fled. Oh, miserable cowardice! sad instance of human weakness! but, as they avoided the crowd, in quiet and darkness their recollection returned to them: there were two loving hearts which yearned after Him, their most dear Master; they stopped; words mighty and powerful, actions loving and god-like, rushed across their mind; they could not leave Him; they turned back, and, gaining sight of the noisy rabble which conducted their LORD, they followed at a distance and kept Him in sight.

O my soul, what sad contemplations are these! thy Saviour is surrounded by a herd of ruffians, who push and rudely assault His most holy Person; His hands are bound tight with cords! O bind me to Thee with cords of love, and lead me with Thee through the path of suffering, surrounded by the reviling and mocking world, unto that heavenly Jerusalem where Thou hast prepared a place for those who humbly endeavour to follow Thy steps by meek obedience, patient suffering, and unflinching courage. But, my soul, how grievous is it to see that rabble hurrying on the LORD down the steep path of the mount, through the brook,

where, with haste, and by being pushed forward, He is drenched with water; then dragged along in triumph through the gate and along the streets in such haste, as not only to exhaust Him, but utterly deprive Him of breath. How grievous are all these things! yea, in every particular is our Saviour tried; there is no suffering of which He has not tasted. He drank the cup of sorrow to the dregs. O detestable sin, which caused all those sufferings! how can I enough loathe it; but how can I avoid it? Let me resolve to follow my LORD more nearly, and beseech Him to loose the chain of my sins by which I am tied and bound, and to forgive me and pity me, and lead me on with Him to the end.

Wednesday

BEFORE EASTER.

AND THEY LED JESUS AWAY TO THE HIGH PRIEST.—
St. Mark, xiv. 53.

LORD, what am I, that the eternal SON of God should suffer one stripe for me ! But Thy love is infinite ; and how great a misery is it to provoke by sin so great a mercy, and despise so miraculous a goodness, and to do fresh despite unto the SON of GOD ! But my sins are many, my infirmities are mighty. Dearest JESU, pity me, for I am accused by my own conscience, and am found guilty. I am stripped naked of my innocence, and bound fast by evil desires, and tormented by stripes and wounds of enraged appetites. Oh, let Thy innocence excuse me, the robes of Thy righteousness clothe me, Thy bondage set me free, and Thy stripes heal me, O holy, immaculate, and martyr Lamb of God. *Amen.*

What a night is this ! there is cold and wind and rain without ; there are loud tongues and fierce faces and stormy passions within. They first drag our LORD to the house of Annas ; thence they haul Him away and take Him to the house of Caiaphas ; and there are private examinations, and dark counsels, and bloody resolves among the great men ; there are rude blows, and mockings, taunting blasphemies, spittings and revilings, among the menials ; with the friends there are estranged looks, then loud oaths, and a flat denial. But tears wipe out some guilt ; blood wipes out some ; there *is* a sin unto death ; we cannot hope or pray for it. Oh, traitor Judas, what was thy portion on that dreadful night ? Did any others partake of that foul crime and just punishment ? It is awful to think on the rage, the madness, the blood-thirsty revenge, which this night brought forth. But there is One Who stands unmoved ; in the midst of squalid poverty, He is majesty ; in the midst of rage and bitterness, He is calm. His words are of heaven — they speak of heaven ; but they are listened to by men, in whose breasts is hell.

Approach, my soul, into the hall of Caiaphas — large it is and gloomy; at the upper end there is a chair; in it sits Caiaphas, in priestly robes; there are soldiers all round; gleaming swords and bright spears send forth dim and flickering rays of light; in the midst stands our LORD: alas, alas! He is bound so tight that He can take no ease, no rest, if even the malice of the petty persecutors who surround Him would allow it: lower down the hall is a fire of coals, before which a group of servants and attendants are warming themselves. There is one among those faces which I recognize — it is Peter; he looks disturbed, agitated, perplexed. A woman approaches him and says something, at which he turns sharply and answers angrily. Again, another speaks; the question is repeated; the words are the same: but Peter has a little while to reflect; still he is blinded by some timidity or passion; he recollects nothing. For the third time one asks; and he curses and swears, and positively affirms something. Hark! there is a warning of the morning; the cock crows. Oh, Peter, why dost thou start? Behold, the LORD turns — He looks upon Peter; that look brings back

conversations, scenes, protestations ; beyond all, it brings some of the last words spoken by his Master to Peter's mind : he remembers he has denied his LORD ! Yes, weep, Peter ; thou canst but weep ! What ! hast thou thrice denied thy beloved LORD, and with oaths hast thou protested against Him ? Oh, let thy tears run down — thou hast no redress — thou canst not expiate thy sin ; thy tears are all thou hast to give ; thy sin must be blotted out with blood, and it is the blood of Him Whose look has brought thee unto Him again, which alone can wipe out this thy transgression. Weep bitterly ! Oh, may I ever be recalled to a sense of my Saviour's mercies by some token of His gracious presence ; but grant, LORD, that I may never fall from Thee ! Oh, give me courage to fight manfully under Thy banner, my merciful Redeemer ; but, if I do fall, look upon me, LORD, and give me the grace of true repentance ; let me not excuse or palliate my offence, but let tears be the evidence of my sorrow, and let amendment be the evidence that the sorrow is of a godly sort.

Then did Caiaphas question our LORD, Who

answered, proclaiming His innocence, and appealing to His followers. But these words, dignified and meek as they were, received no better answer than a blow. It is supposed that Malchus struck our blessed LORD; so that the blow was sharpened by ingratitude, and was accompanied by insulting words. None reproved the insult, though offered before the supreme judge in full court, and by a slave. O Saviour, when I think of Thy face, which to behold will be the consummation of bliss, thus rudely struck, how can I sufficiently shrink with horror at the deed, and dwell in adoring contemplation of that glorious countenance, which gives light, and health, and joy to Thy saints, and on which angels gaze with adoring wonder! But more do I admire the meekness and love of Thy words, "Why smitest thou Me?" O LORD, stricken, smitten, and afflicted art Thou, and all for me! I shrink from all pain and suffering; I am angry when the least insult is offered to me; even an unkind look makes me angry. Let me follow Thee, and walk with Thee, in the regions of patience and tranquillity and toleration of injuries. At the same time let me

meekly assert my innocence, not resisting the sentence, but testifying that it is undeserved; and, if so be that I cannot escape the condemnation, let me remember that there will be another tribunal, where every good cause will receive a just and unerring sentence.

False witnesses then rise up; they lay to His charge things that He knew not; nothing can exceed the injustice, the confusion of the tribunal; for though the witnesses found nothing against Him, still Caiaphas perseveres, and he solemnly adjures our LORD to say Who He is. "I Am," shows the eternal Godhead; and the lowly, despised, and ill-treated Son of Man speaks of His return in glory. But Caiaphas understands not—hears not. He rends his clothes and speaks of blasphemy. He does right, for the synagogue is rent in twain by his unbelief; and that rent will never be made up. Then comes a terrible scene, too terrible to look upon. Who can look upon it without shuddering, and starting back in terror? A troop of the most debased men seize upon the helpless One, to wreak their rage upon Him, and pour out their devilish hatred on His devoted head.

The most acute feelings which ever mortal possessed are, when compared to those of Jesus, like the coarse skin on the hand of a labourer to the tender and transparent filament covering the eye. I know how the smallest sin, viewed at a distance, grieved and offended His soul; I may then judge how the Holy One must have suffered when the rage of the ungodly overwhelmed Him. They salute Him with insulting mockery, and heap upon Him terms of opprobrium. But mere words are not all—they smite the Man of Sorrows on the face, on the back, on the bosom, some with hands, some with reeds; no just man interposes to drive away these miscreants—no thunderbolt descends to annihilate them. They proceed in their work; they spit on Him the venom of their hatred; they blindfold Him, and bid Him prophesy who smites Him. Oh, why does no man interpose to save this innocent and meek Victim? What a tempest of shame and woe breaks upon Thy holy head, O my Saviour! Never hadst Thou undergone such unutterable agony but that Thy love had impelled Thee to satisfy the claims of eternal justice.

Thou hast reaped the harvest of our sins ; Thou hast suffered from the flames kindled by our misdeeds ; and the sword struck Thee which our transgressions had struck out of its sheath. But why, O Saviour, didst Thou undergo all this ? It was for the sins which we have committed — it was for the sinfulness of our nature ; this is the true and only cause of all these sufferings. Reflect upon this, O my soul, and then say how dost thou feel towards that which made thy Saviour bleed ? Canst thou embrace sin, the murderer of the LORD JESUS, instead of detesting it with all the fervour of thy nature ? Canst thou still cherish it, instead of flying its presence, and swearing eternal hatred against it ? No ; thou must contemplate this scene, and find in it additional reasons for hating sin, and new motives for struggling against it.

Thou must return to the world again ; thy work is before Thee ; temptations are around thee ; Satan stands ready to dart the sharp arrows of pride and evil thoughts and bad desires into thy heart ; but engrave this scene in the palace of Caiaphas on the walls of thy chamber

— hang it as an amulet round thy neck ; go to the tranquil picture of thy Redeemer's Passion, and then go forth unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach, and hoping for a share in His victory.

Thursday

BEFORE EASTER.

AND THE WHOLE MULTITUDE OF THEM AROSE, AND LED HIM
UNTO PILATE.— St. Luke, xxiii. 1.

O SWEET JESU, Who, being stripped, wouldest be bound to a pillar and scourged, whereby Thy blessed Body was torn and wounded, heal my wounds by Thy stripes, take all evil thoughts from me, and grant me patience to endure the strokes of Thy fatherly visitation. O gracious LORD, Who, after so many wounds received, and so much blood shed, wast mocked and crowned with thorns, grant that the remembrance thereof may be imprinted in my heart, and that I may love Thee, and wholly think of Thee, wholly contemplate Thy bitter pains!

The fearful, agonizing night is past, and morning dawns; but it brings no cessation of

torture, no relaxation of persecution, to our dearest LORD, for the council of the chief priests and elders of the people meet, and they condemn Him to death. Now the whole multitude are in a stir; the council rise, and proceed in a body to Pilate; behind them their Victim is dragged, bound, and used with every possible indignity. The multitude follow; how they rush after the steps of that meek Lamb, Who, dragged on by a cord tied round His neck, has no power to look round at His persecutors as they push and kick Him, and inflict blows on His sacred Body with their staffs.

Behold, they are at the judgment hall; the Jews go not in lest they should be defiled, and so be prevented from eating the passover. What hypocrisy is this! they fear to enter into a heathen house; but they fear not to shed innocent blood. They do honour to the type, and pollute themselves with the Blood of CHRIST. Our LORD is before Pilate, who questions Him, and, finding no fault in Him, goes out, and offers to release Him. Oh, noble testimony to the innocency of CHRIST—"I find no fault in Him;" that same mouth afterwards condemned Him to death, but still found no

fault in Him. Then they all cried, "Not this man, but Barabbas!" Thus is the Sinless condemned, the sinner left blameless. O LORD, Thou hast suffered the penalty; *I* am the Barabbas Thou hast freed; let me think on the feelings with which the robber and murderer received the news of his liberation; such feelings should be mine; *I* have sinned, CHRIST has suffered — the Just for the unjust.

And now Pilate sits down on the judgment-seat; the multitude accuse our LORD; He stands bound, pale, His head hanging down, perfectly motionless; they cry out in their rage; they are mad against Him; but He answers them not a word; as a lamb before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth. The governor marvelled, and yet he found no fault in Him; but, finding He was from Galilee, he sent our Lord to Herod. Here is another cruel diversion for the rude multitude! Herod was pleased to see Him of Whom he had heard such wonders; but our LORD spoke not. The chief priests and elders had their way; they influenced Herod's jealousy, accusing Him of being a king. Herod and all his soldiers then mocked and derided Him; see how

they laugh and jeer; they think it a good jest to clothe Him in a dirty white robe, and they look on with satisfaction as He is scorned and hooted at by the mob on His way back to Pilate. Oh, that I could deserve the robe of innocence which my dearest LORD then wore! oh, that I could bear myself with the patience, the calmness, the serenity, so undisturbed by the passing events, which He exhibited during this fearful time of His Passion! But it is not yet done; for Pilate still affirms His innocence, again offers His liberty; they again demand Barabbas. What a fearful tumult! fearful, because raised by the violent passions of man against the Sinless — against God!

“What shall I do with Him Whom ye call the King of the Jews?” Crucify Him! crucify Him! The tumult has reached its height, and the fiery sea of human passion displays its utmost terrors. Pilate has just cried, “I find no fault against this Man;” but this only adds oil to their wrath and hatred; and the more earnestly he exerts himself to save the accused, the more terrible and satanic becomes the cry of the raging multitude, “Crucify Him! crucify Him!” Is there no conscience amongst that vast con-

course? Do no feelings of compassion agitate the bosoms of some among them? Yea; there may be whisperings of conscience, but they are stifled; a feeling of pity may begin to whisper, but it is disregarded; mysterious warnings may be repeated, but no one gives ear to them; many feel in their hearts, Pilate is right — the Man is guiltless; some feel already the sting of the horrible imprecation which they have drawn on their heads, “His blood be on us and on our children.” But these feelings are all stifled; their consciences are deadened; He is doomed to fall a sacrifice to their hatred; a thousand voices shriek, “Crucify Him! crucify Him!” The high priests join the people; men, women, and children, all desire His death. Pilate asks, “What evil hath He done?” and repeats, “I have found no cause of death in Him; I will therefore chastise Him, and let Him go.” But the storm of their evil passions here breaks loose again, and, “Away with Him, away with Him,” is thundered from every side. Pilate once more tries to interpose, but in vain; his voice is unheard amidst the roars of the populace; his firmness gives way; he yields to the clamour of the infuriated

rabble; he condemns JESUS to be crucified, and the murderer he sets at liberty.

“Then Pilate took JESUS and scourged Him.”

Behold, O my soul, this most cruel spectacle! thy Saviour is stripped, He suffers the shame; He, most modest, is exposed naked to the populace, and He is bound with cruel cords to a pillar, and then lashed with scourges; each stroke lays bare a long furrow in His tender flesh. His blood streams to the ground, the pavement is covered with it. O my Saviour, I hear the sharp sound of the whips as they fly through the air and descend upon Thy most holy Body; I cannot bear that Thou shouldst be thus tormented. Stop your cruelty, O you malicious executioners; is it not enough that the back of your Victim is one large wound? The most cruel part of all is, that thou, O my soul, hast inflicted these stripes upon Thy LORD; these blows are thine; thy sins have given them, and they give remedies to thy sins. “He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed.”

He is released from the pillar ; now at last are His tortures over ; but no ; they let Him seek His poor garments, which are scattered up and down. See with what difficulty He raises His maimed arms to place them over Him ! The soldiers drag Him into their hall ; they tear off His upper garment, which rubs and agonizes His wounds ; they put upon Him a purple robe ; and on His head they place a crown of thorns, which they rudely push over His brows, making blood to gush out through every puncture of those cruel thorns. They put a reed in His hand for a sceptre, and they bow before Him in mockery : " Hail ! King of the Jews."

Yea, hail, Thou most blessed King, my LORD, my Saviour ! In every particular Thou hast borne our griefs ; Thy blood has purified the earth from its curse ; Thy brow carries the thorns of which that curse was the fruit. O LORD, I have nothing to say ; Thy sufferings overwhelm me ; a broken and contrite heart, O Saviour, is all that I can offer ; despise it not.

They lead Him forth ; BEHOLD THE MAN ! Yes, look at Him ! The Man is in every part of

His Body given up to wounds and bruises; His cheeks moist with the horrible spittings of the Jews; His head crowned with thorns, and trickling down with blood. Does He look royal? Yes; He is our King — the Captain of our salvation; the King Who gave Himself a ransom for His unworthy subjects. He stands before the people, so weak, so suffering, that He can hardly support Himself; He has His life still, His human life; *that* will soon be taken away, and the sacrifice will be complete!

Good Friday.

AND WHEN THEY WERE COME TO THE PLACE, WHICH IS CALLED CALVARY, THERE THEY CRUCIFIED HIM, AND THE MALEFACTORS, ONE ON THE RIGHT HAND, AND THE OTHER ON THE LEFT.— St. Luke, xxiii. 33.

O MERCIFUL Redeemer, Who didst suffer Thy sacred hands and feet to be pierced with nails and fastened to the Cross, and then didst, with great effusion of blood, suffer inexpressible torments; grant that I may always, with a faithful and true heart, bear in mind Thy exceeding great love, Who wouldst endure so great and grievous things for me. Purge and wash my soul with those streams of Thy most precious Blood; blot out the hand-writing of transgressions that is against me, and nail it to Thy Cross, and be merciful unto me. *Amen.*

The sentence of death is to be put into execution; the soldiers seize our blessed LORD, pull off His scarlet robe, and put on His own

garments. But the King of sufferings does not lay aside His crown of thorns; that imperial diadem remains on His sacred brow, until it is exchanged for a diadem of glory.

Behold the true Isaac walking forth, bearing the wood of His sacrifice! He is content to carry His own Cross, for He meekly submits to all they put upon Him. But consider what the burthen of a heavy Cross is to One Who is all over wounds—faint with watchings—His mind tormented—His ears distracted with discordant cries—His heart broken by the insults of His own people; and yet He carries His Cross until His tottering limbs refuse to move, and He sinks exhausted under the load. Then they take away the Cross, and looking round, they see a simple countryman, Simon of Cyrene: on him they lay the Cross, and they lead the fainting, weary, oppressed Man of Sorrows on the dolorous way.

How meek and silent is our dearest LORD under this new trial! I would run to Him and ease His sorely furrowed back from its burthen. Yes, my soul, run to Jesus! Simon of Cyrene was permitted to carry His Cross, to show that man may enter into fellowship of

sufferings with **CHRIST**; and He will enable thee to carry any cross which He sees fit to lay on thee. And what is the cross thou hast to bear? From thy birth until now, and henceforward until thy death, some cross has ever been presented to thee; hast thou borne it meekly, after thy **LORD**'s example? No; thou hast complained and murmured; thou hast endeavoured to avoid taking it up; thou hast forgotten thy Saviour, and hast laid down the easy yoke of the **LORD**, and assumed that heavy burthen of the world which, ere long, Satan will chain to thy back with fetters not to be removed. Shake off thy sloth, O my soul, and rise; follow thy **LORD** in the sorrowful way of His Cross; He has trodden it before thee; take up thy cross, then, and follow Him. Thou mayest have to go on thy way weeping; but be of good cheer, thy **LORD** beckons thee on; He helps thy willing spirit; thy burthen is lightened by His gracious aid; at last, thou wilt cast it down in His presence, in the mansions He has won by His Cross and Passion.

But even on His way our dearest **LORD** is full of compassion and tenderness for His followers: He sees the weeping women, and He

speaks to them; and though His words speak of sorrows and troubles to come, yet there must have been support in hearing that much loved voice, which was ever raised for their instruction and comfort.

JESUS was led without the gate; He was to be a Sacrifice for all the world, and therefore was He to be immolated without the pale of the city. The place was a hill, steep and difficult of ascent, foul and abominable from the remains of former deeds of blood; skulls and bones lie beneath the holy feet as they reach the place of execution; this is Golgotha. Here the SON of GOD is to die the death of a malefactor, to be numbered among those transgressors whose bones lie scattered about like as when one heweth wood upon the earth.

Behold, He stands still: they give Him to drink of a horrible mixture of vinegar and gall, of which, when He had tasted, He would not drink. Thou wouldest drain Thy cup of suffering to the dregs, O blessed Saviour! that nauseous potion Thou didst taste, for Thou didst not reject the most bitter draught; but, as it was meant to deaden Thy sensations, Thou wouldest not drink thereof, for Thou didst will to suffer all.

How different from us weak mortals ! We shrink from bodily pain ; we will not undergo it without much persuasion, and we greedily avail ourselves of any means to allay our suffering, forgetting our highest privilege, which consists in standing by the Cross — partaking of its shame, and sharing in its sufferings. But, after He had rejected the cup, His cruel tormentors approach Him, and strip Him of all His garments. When I consider the state which the sacred Body was in, I shall understand the pain of this act ; the wounds, all open, adhere to those poor garments, which are ruthlessly torn off, and they now, open and bleeding, are exposed to the cold air.

The Cross is on the ground ; see them stretch our dearest LORD upon it. One man stands on each side — each takes a hand of our LORD — they strike together — a long and cruel nail pierces through flesh and sinew — it crushes through bones and joints — and transfixes those hands to the wood. They then go to His feet, which, being placed one over the other, are also secured by a long nail. The Cross is now fixed upright in its position, and our LORD hangs ; His whole weight depends from the

wounds in His hands. Oh, the agony, the torture of that position ! And yet, He speaks ; He is suffering from the cruelty of these wicked men, who now stand gazing on their work ; and yet His words are a prayer for them.

He casts His eyes to heaven and says, " Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Who can tell what he does in sinning against the LORD ? who can count the big drops of that agony occasioned by sin ? who can number the lashes of that scourge ? who can tell the number, length, and depth of those wounds ? who can measure the blood poured out on the Cross ? Father, forgive me ; I knew not, truly I knew not, what I did in sinning against Thee. Behold the Lamb of God ! His arms are stretched out to save ; He would encompass all the world in His embrace. But what is the superscription which they are setting up over His head ? JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS ! written in three languages, that all the world might know that the LORD is King over all the earth ; now has He set His King on His holy hill of Zion.

Pilate is the blind instrument of this wonderful declaration ; the Jews from all parts see

it; and the mockery of the one, and the unbelief of the others, are turned to the great purpose of fulfilling God's gracious scheme of salvation for man.

There are four soldiers seated at a short distance from the Cross, and they have our LORD's garments to divide among themselves: they make four lots of them; but when they come to His coat, they cast lots for it whose it should be. The coat was seamless, which shows that it was of the meanest kind then made, and is an evidence of the deep poverty of Him Who died to make many rich with graces and blessings. This coat intimates the unity and oneness of every thing belonging to CHRIST; all that are His must be one in faith, hope, and charity; and He will be ours wholly and without division, or He will not be ours at all.

But my eyes are too long withdrawn from that Cross on which hangs my dearest Master and only LORD: there He hangs, silently and with meekness taking the revilings of the passers by; their words are sharp swords, but He neither strives nor cries; He hears their bitter words, but He answers not. "Thy rebuke has broken My heart; I am full of heaviness; I

looked for some to have pity on Me, but there was no man; neither found I any to comfort Me." He was content to do His Father's will; His law was in His heart.

And now the thieves, who were crucified with Him, begin to join the railers; but one had his heart softened, and our LORD's silent preaching on the Cross so affected him that he saw and recognized the CHRIST: "We receive the just rewards for the things we have done; but this Man hath done nothing amiss." Here the malice of the Jews is turned to the glory of God. What they intended as a disgrace is an occasion of high honour, and an opportunity of mercy. The thief was converted; He knew his Saviour: "LORD, remember me when Thou shalt come into Thy kingdom." JESUS said unto him, "Verily I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise."

Now there stood by the Cross of JESUS, His mother, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene: another there was — the only one among His disciples — he whom JESUS loved. Love drew that disciple there, and Love met him there; for our dear LORD, casting His eyes towards the weeping group, said to His mo-

ther, "Behold thy son;" then said He to the disciple, "Behold thy mother;" and from that hour, that disciple took her unto his own home.

Two of our LORD's sayings on the Cross are addressed to mankind: one of these is an acceptance of penitence — the other an exhortation to filial piety. The two lessons, therefore, that our blessed LORD may be supposed to bequeath to us, are penitence and filial piety. How blest are we in being allowed to approach and hear the last words of our LORD, and in gathering therefrom the lessons of love and duty, and the incitements to piety and adoration, they contain! What rewards does our LORD reserve for those that love Him! Here is John, who had given up all to follow Jesus, now entrusted with the sacred charge of ministering to the comfort of his LORD's mother. He seems to devolve upon His disciple the title of son, which He once deigned to hold, and which He was about to relinquish with the garb of humanity with which He had clothed Himself; and He also, in tender compassion, supplied to each some comfort, under the trial and affliction which His sufferings and death were to them.

There is now a darkness over the face of the earth from the sixth until the ninth hour. This is a mysterious and most awful fact; darkness has something in it which inspires dread, and an unusual obscurity out of the course of nature makes us feel as if some great convulsion were coming on. The Saviour of the world is in His last agony; all nature groans, and is in agony with Him; the sun withdraws its shining, and refuses to look on that final consummation of its Creator's mysterious will. But at the ninth hour there came an awful voice:—hark! it is the sound as of one in utter desolation and bitter agony; it is accompanied with strong crying and tears; it is the voice of the Son of Man! ELI, ELI, LAMA SABACTHANI!

O my Saviour, dost Thou indeed see Thyself to be thus, in the extremity of Thy torment, forsaken of Thy Father! O LORD, this is the sting of death; Thou hast now extracted it: for me hast Thou been at such great pain; and Thou hast so undergone it that I may never be forsaken or cast aside; though I am so sinful, Thou wert without sin.

Now were all things accomplished, and JESUS

said, "*I thirst*;" one runs to give Him a sponge filled with vinegar to moisten His parched lips; but nature is exhausted, the sacred head bows down upon the breast, and the pallor of death overspreads the divine countenance; suddenly He lifts His head — the moment is come — He cries with a loud voice, "*It is finished*!" He bows His head, and gives up the ghost.

"It is finished." O my Saviour, Thy great struggle is over, Thy victory is complete, mankind is saved; the covenant of works is at an end, the vail of the temple is rent in twain; all nature reels and totters at the sound of that loud voice — the earth quakes — the rocks are rent — the graves give up their dead — for the atonement is made; the High Priest has entered into the holy of holies; the Blood is sprinkled, and mankind is saved! Lift up thine eyes to the Cross; there hangs the lifeless Body; the limbs lately writhing in agony are still; the eyes are shut; the heart, broken by the sinfulness of men, has ceased its flutterings; to agony has succeeded rest; to noise, stillness; awe, and sorrow, and tears, are in all faces. All the people smite their breasts, and return to Jerusalem; only the devoted band of loving

followers surround the Cross; they cannot, will not, leave the Body of their dear LORD, lest any should come and insult the sacred Corpse; and to justify their apprehensions, they observe soldiers approaching: these see their Victim is dead; and yet, with final malice and as a parting indignity, they pierce His side with a spear; there issue from that painless wound, Water and Blood. Here are the two Sacraments of the Church streaming from the side of our blessed LORD; that wound will henceforth be a place to hide me in, and to cover me from all the assaults of the world, the flesh, and the devil; in that Water may I wash and be made clean; that Blood, running all over me, will purify me and unite me to Him Who has shed it for me.

And now see the devout Joseph of Arimathea approaching: he has been to Pilate and begged the body of Jesus, and he comes with Nicodemus to claim his privilege; the company round the Cross assist these devout men in tenderly unfastening the hands and the feet from their cruel bondage: how they lament, as gradually they lower the sacred Corpse to the ground; and when it is placed there, see how

the blessed Virgin hangs over that thorn-crowned head ! she weeps as she gazes on the features she has loved and adored ; the sword pierces her own soul, as, in the days of her youth, Simeon had predicted to her. The other women spend a few moments in reverently bending over the lifeless form of their LORD ; but the time is short ; they anoint the Body, and they wrap it in linen with costly spices, and they bear it to the sepulchre, prepared by the piety of Joseph. The Body is deposited ; one last look—and then the stone is rolled up, the seal put upon it, and the watch set.

And now, my soul, smite thy breast and return ; the agonizing time is over ; quiet and calm succeed to noise and passion. Ponder over what thou hast lately seen, and thank thy God for having brought thee near enough to consider the sacrifice of His dear Son.

Under the shadow of the Cross do thou devoutly and frequently kneel, and often look up to thy dearest LORD. Blessed be those hands that wrought so many miracles, and were so barbarously bored with cruel nails. Blessed be the feet that so often travelled for us, and were at last so unmercifully nailed to the

Cross. Blessed be the head that was crowned with thorns — the head that so industriously studied our happiness. Blessed be the heart that was pierced with a spear — the heart that so passionately loved our peace !

Oh what excess of kindness was this — what extremity of kindness, love, and pity ! The LORD is sold, that the slave may go free ; the Innocent condemned, that the guilty may be saved ; the Physician is sick, that the patient may be cured ; and God Himself dies, that man may live !

Easter Eve.

AND THEY RETURNED, AND PREPARED SPICES AND OINTMENTS; AND RESTED THE SABBATH DAY ACCORDING TO THE COMMANDMENT. — St. Luke, xxiii. 56.

ALMIGHTY GOD, Who has given Thine only SON JESUS CHRIST, our Saviour, for us, to expire on the Cross, and descend into the grave, that He might destroy thereby the life of sin, and bury the terrors of death; grant, I beseech Thee, that they may never rise again to tempt me or fright me from the ways of virtue; nor shake this sure and fundamental truth which Thy grace has laid in our hearts, that the greatest mischiefs and tribulations I can suffer, are but momentary, and work above measure in us an eternal weight of glory; through the same JESUS CHRIST our LORD. *Amen.*

It is over. Joseph, having performed his pious offices, is gone; Nicodemus is gone; the

women, who followed our dear LORD from Galilee, are gone; they are preparing for another solemn ceremony; they are resting from their past fatigues and emotion. They are still in sorrow; but it is voiceless deep grief, unagitated by any passing events: there is rest all round them.

In that sacred garden there is stillness and solitude. Approach, O my soul, and view the place which encloses the Body of thy dearest LORD. Thou art not alone; opposite to the door of the sepulchre there are two women sitting on the ground — they are mourners — they weep for their LORD. It is Mary Magdalene and Mary the wife of Cleophas, who are thus watching with intense love and earnest devotion that spot, which encloses all that remains to them of Him Who was their joy, their hope, their guide, their comforter, their friend. Watch with them, my soul; within that cold, dark sepulchre, lies the clay cold form of Him Whom thou hast been following and watching with intense admiration and devotion. Thy LORD is sleeping in the rock; He is hidden from thine eyes; but thou mayest think upon Him, and reverently remember that

the Form which now lies so still, so calm, was always going about doing good: that head, now reposing on the hard stone, was always devising some means of benefiting His people: the eyes, closed now in the sleep of death, were often raised in communion and devotion with heaven; they often beheld with love and compassion His suffering friends and followers; they wept tears of grief for sorrow, of compassion for sinners; they were turned in reproof upon Peter;—they are shut; He is dead: that still marble-like face, with its drops of blood—how tenderly was it turned upon His own, how awfully did it frown upon sinners! See that pierced side! those maimed hands! those feet torn with nails! O Saviour, those are the wounds Thou didst receive in the house of a friend! I kneel and weep over Thee as Thou reposest on Thy stony bed; prostrate before Thy tomb I confess my misery, and in the lowliest posture of an afflicted pilgrim I humbly implore Thy mercy.

Thy holy Body reposes peacefully in the grave; Thy Soul is gone to redeem Thy captives; but I, alas! am left a helpless orphan in the midst of mine enemies. Behold, I am set

in the midst of dangers and temptations : I cannot loose myself from them. O bury me with Thee, gracious Saviour ! let me abide in this cleft of the rock, safe from every danger ; shut me out from the world ; I am content to dwell here with Thee.

How can I testify my sorrow, my remorse, for having thus wounded Thee and pierced Thee, and pained Thee ? How can I take the thorns from Thy brow ? I have stricken Thee dead ; my sins did all this, and yet I live, though Thou art dead ! And how cold and dead I am, not to die of the grief of having thus tormented Thee — agonized Thee — killed Thee ! I tremble for myself when I consider all this ; I tremble to think that I do not feel enough the necessity there was for Thy thus dying for me ! Oh ! let me be buried in Thy grave, LORD ; then, in stillness and quiet, in weeping and lamenting, let me live to shun and die to the world, and through this grave, this gate, let me pass to a joyful resurrection with Thee.

This is a day for memories of the past. The stillness and the solitude aid the memory to restore scenes gone by, events long passed. Thy

Saviour should reign supreme in these recollections; thy walk through life must be with Him: He should be the prominent figure in all thy musings. But at His side walk some whose lives were ever sanctified by His presence and His love, and whose deaths did not divide them from Him. Yes, my soul, in this still Sabbath, thou mayest think on the DEAD IN CHRIST; in attending thy Saviour's tomb, thou mayest think on their funeral days; and remember, as they dropped one by one into the grave by His side, how thou didst weep over them: and yet remember, as their virtues, their graces, their worth, passed in review before thee, thou couldst but feel that they were leaving a world which was not worthy of them, to join a Saviour, Who, to purchase their salvation, was a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; Who had borne their griefs and carried their sorrows; Who was stricken, smitten, afflicted; Who was wounded for their transgressions and bruised for their iniquities; and Who, having passed through the dark valley of the shadow of death, has prepared a place more fit for their abode. Write, "Blessed are the dead who die in the LORD: even so saith the Spirit, for they rest

from their labours." "O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory? Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our LORD JESUS CHRIST."

Easter Day.

HE IS RISEN; HE IS NOT HERE: BEHOLD THE PLACE
WHERE THEY LAID HIM.—St. Mark, xvi. 6.

THIS is the day the LORD hath made, let
us rejoice and be glad in it.

Welcome, blest day, wherein the Sun of
Righteousness arose and chased away the clouds
of fear.

Welcome, thou birthday of our hopes, a day
of joy and refreshment.

Welcome to us and our dark world, and may
thy radiant name shine bright for ever.

This is the day which our LORD hath made,
let us be glad and rejoice therein. Hallelujah!

What is it, O my soul, that on thy first
rousing thyself this morning, gives thee a thrill
of joy and happiness? There is a cause of joy
felt in thy heart before thy senses are roused
sufficiently to know what it is. Yesterday was
all stillness and silence; to-day there is a glad

murmur which seems to say that all nature rejoices.

What is it that those glad bells so joyously ring out?—THE LORD IS RISEN! Sing unto our LORD a psalm of joy; sing praises unto the God of our salvation:

Sing with a loud and cheerful voice, sing with a glad and thankful heart.

Say to the weak of spirit, be strong; and unto the sorrowful, be of good comfort.

Tell all the world this soul reviving truth, and may all hearts leap to hear it:

Tell them the LORD of life is risen again, and has clothed Himself with immortal glory.

He made angels messengers of His victory, and vouchsafed even Himself to bring us the joyful news!

The anxious women came when it was yet dark, and they brought sweet spices to the grave of their beloved Master.

But behold there was an earthquake; the angel of the LORD descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. What mighty works are proceeding in the silence of this early morning! The LORD rises from His stony grave; the rock

and the sealed stone to Him are as nothing ; but His footsteps are not known ; no mortal eye saw the raising of the pierced and mangled form from death to glory and immortality ; He made darkness His secret place, and He issued from it clothed in power, and invested with the glorious body of His resurrection.

But this solemn and dark stillness gave place to an earthquake ; and then behold the majestic and noble creature sent from God to remove the obstacle which prevented our mortal eyes from beholding our Lord's victory : he descended, and came and rolled back the stone, and then sat thereon ; his work was finished ; the gates of death were rolled away ; the victory was won ; and the sitting posture of the angel betokens rest after labour, and quiet after conflict.

The mourning women who came loaded with sweet spices, now approach the tomb, forgetful, in their grief, that they had no one to roll the stone from the door of the sepulchre. I can see them looking from one to the other ; can anything be more mournful ? It shews how dark and dismal my life would be without the Easter Sun ; I might have stood like those

women, a sorrowing orphan in this vale of tears ; I might have looked in vain for some one to roll away the hard and heavy masses of sin and impurity which hid the Saviour from view. But, thanks be to God, the LORD is risen, the stones are rolled away ! I have been buried with Him in baptism ; may I arise with Him to newness of life !

The women advance ; what do they see ? The stone has been rolled away, the grave is open, the angel bids them not to fear : Ye seek JESUS of Nazareth ; He is not here ; He is risen ; behold the place where they laid Him. The women enter ; they are full of awe ; they know not what they shall see : there is the dark and silent bed on which they had seen deposited the mangled form of the Man of sorrows ; but He is no longer there, and at the head and at the foot of that burial place sat two angels. They feared ; but the heavenly messengers spake, and reminded them of their dear LORD's own prophecy concerning Himself ; and they returned with joy and gladness to relate the wondrous news to their fellow disciples.

O LORD, Thou art wonderful, Thou art gracious ; Thou sendest angels to these devout

women to ease them of their anxiety, and to manifest to them Thy resurrection. In this we see how prompt Thy heavenly messengers are, not only in their service to Thee, their LORD, but also to the meanest of Thy servants, especially in the furtherance of their spiritual designs. If we bring our sweet odours they will be sure to roll away the stone. Why do we not imitate them by our forwardness to promote each other's salvation? We pray to do Thy Will here as they do in heaven; if we do not endeavour to act up to our wishes, we do but mock Thee in our devotions.

And now Thou art risen indeed, O gracious LORD! Raise me up, I pray Thee, that I may enter with Thee into newness of life; grant that I may no longer grovel in the mire and clay of my sins, but that I may seek those things which are above. I have followed Thy steps, O LORD, all through Thy bitter and toilsome life. I am loath to part from Thee, even though Thou art now gone to live in glory. I miss the sweet sound of Thy loving voice. I no longer can follow the footsteps which always lead to some great work of mercy and love; but accept, LORD, my humble attempts at serv-

ing Thee, when I bring the odours and sweet spices of prayers, praises, and thanksgivings, and offer them before the throne of Thy glory. Hallelujah, for the LORD God Omnipotent reigneth ! The LORD is risen ; the bonds of the grave are broken ; we are delivered. The Stone which the builders refused is become the Head stone in the corner. Thou hast opened unto me the gates of righteousness ; from henceforth I may go into them !

Now may our mouth be filled with laughter, and our tongue with joy. Now may they say among the heathen, The LORD hath done great things for them ; yea, the LORD hath done great things for us already, whereof we rejoice. We have sown in tears, we shall reap in joy.

For He that went on His way weeping, and bringing forth good seed, is come again with joy, and we are the sheaves He has brought with Him.

Monday

IN EASTER WEEK.

WOMAN, WHY WEEPEST THOU ?— St. John, xx. 13.

ALMIGHTY GOD, Who, through Thine only-begotten SON JESUS CHRIST, hast overcome death, and opened unto us the gate of everlasting life; we humbly beseech Thee, that as by Thy special grace preventing us, Thou dost put into our minds good desires, so by Thy continual help, we may bring the same to good effect; through JESUS CHRIST our LORD, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the HOLY GHOST, ever One God, world without end. *Amen.*

The Easter morning dawns clear and bright; all nature is glad and rejoices with her LORD; but there is still one who partakes not of the general joy: behold her standing, oppressed with sorrow, leaning against the rock, her face

covered with her hands : she seems to have lost all consciousness of what is going on around her ; she only knows that the only joy and peace she has on earth is taken away from her : once she was sinful, quite lost and degraded ; seven devils had possession of her ; and she had experienced the bitter pangs of hopeless, gnawing misery and guilt. But at the moment when she would have sunk, One came to her, a Man, Who had said to her, in the name of God, "Thy sins are forgiven ;" a Man Who loosed her from the bondage which had held her for years, Who had assured her of love and forgiveness, and Who had opened to her view the joys of heaven and of eternity. From that moment who can wonder that Mary followed her LORD and Friend whithersoever He went ? He was her all in this world, and without Him her peace and joy would have fled. But alas ! she had had much to suffer for her beloved LORD ; He had come to a fearful, an agonizing end ; no hand had been stretched out to save Him ; no voice from heaven had proclaimed His innocence. Mary had clung weeping to the Cross ; she had followed the mournful group as they carried their precious load to the tomb ; she

had seen the dear Form laid in its narrow bed, and from that moment she had felt as if nothing remained to her; she stayed weeping in the garden; ever and anon a gleam of hope shot into her mind, and she waited and watched for some manifestation of she knew not what; but it came not; desolate and forlorn she returned to her dark home, and so spent the dreary hours of her Sabbath. But early on the following morning she returned to the hallowed spot where her all lay buried; and behold the stone was away, the tomb was empty! Her first thought was that His enemies had stolen away the dead body of her Master, and despair took the place of every other feeling in her bosom; she leant her head against the rock, and her mind ran over vaguely all the events of the past—the future was a blank to her. Why does she not look up? If faith could once have got uppermost, she would have seen the linen cloths, and the napkins, and all the wonderful order of the tomb; but despair still reigns, and she must be roused by a louder voice. Mary at last stoops and looks into the sepulchre. She can hardly believe that her LORD is actually taken away, she looks to confirm herself;

when lo ! what is it that meets her eye ? Not the body of her dear Master, but two bright and glorious angels sitting, one at the head, the other at the feet where He had been laid. Why does Mary take no notice of these glorious beings ? It never seems to strike her that they are in some way connected with the disappearance of Him Who alone occupies her thoughts, and she continues weeping over the empty tomb, whence all her hope is fled. The angels address Mary with great tenderness and love : Woman, why weepest thou ? Why, upon the most joyful morning that ever dawned, art thou dissolved in tears ? “ Because they have taken away my LORD, and I know not where they have laid Him.” Can we any longer wonder at her grief, when her LORD, her King, is taken away from her ? She believes Him to be dead ; she fears His precious corpse has been misused by those who in life so cruelly maltreated Him. And here let all those who have cause for tears weep with Mary. Is not Mary’s grief ours ? Is not the true cause of all tears this : “ They have taken away my LORD, I know not where He is ?” We stand by the tomb ; we weep. Why weepest thou ? My soul, if

JESUS be there, if He say to us, "I am the Resurrection and the Life," are we not comforted? We may weep, but not the tears of hopeless sorrow. No; those only are shed "when they have taken away the LORD."

Yes; when we are weeping over the past; when sins and infirmities, evil thoughts and hasty words crowd upon our recollection; when the deadness and dryness, consequent upon a long season of carelessness, oppress the soul; when we would turn unto the LORD, and find how hard it is to do so, oh, let us weep bitterly, and in agony confess that they have taken away the LORD; we know not where He is, He is not there! Come to us again, O LORD, our Saviour; shew us the light of Thy countenance, and have mercy on us; for neither angels nor archangels nor the whole company of heaven can comfort us, if Thou art not with us.

Still Mary leans against the tomb, still she weeps. She turns, and sees One standing by her; it is Himself, and she knows it not! He speaks to her, and the words of the angels are repeated by Him: Woman, why weepest thou; whom seekest thou? These are the first words of our LORD since His resurrection. How

altered is the scene! He, Who with strong crying and tears gave up the ghost, now asks, "Why weepest thou?" O Thou, Who wilt wipe all tears from all faces, it is Thee alone we seek; without Thee this world is a barren wilderness; but with Thee is all joy and happiness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. Mary, possessed with the idea that it is the gardener she is addressing, looks not at Him, but, following her own sad thoughts, says: "Sir, if thou have borne Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away."

He answers her not: He speaks one word; she starts as from a dream; it is a voice like *His* voice; her own name pronounced in well known accents. What must be her feelings? Trembling, she turns herself; He was dead, and is alive again! He was lost, and is found! She utters one word, "Rabboni." Oh, what depths of love, of joy, of adoration, are found in that one word. She advances, she falls at His feet, she stretches forth her hands to clasp His knees; but He says, "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to My Father."

We have hitherto been contemplating the

life of our blessed Saviour in the flesh ; we have followed Him about as Man, though I trust we have never lost sight of the awful fact that He is God also. Now He is no longer Man as before, suffering Man ; He has finished the work He had to do as Man, and is going to ascend as God into the heavens. Mary has been mourning over His Body ; she dwelt too much upon the Man ; she is now rebuked, and reminded that He is God, and must not be approached as heretofore.

Take this rebuke and this lesson, O my soul : if thou hast dwelt too much upon the human sufferings of our dear LORD ; if thou hast wept over His dead Body, and mourned with too engrossing a sorrow over thine own loss, in His being withdrawn from thine eyes, remember the words, "Touch Me not ;" and though in holy joy and rapt enthusiasm thou mayest fall at His feet, and exclaim, "Rabboni !" thou must do so in reverent and humble adoration ; He is thy God, and cannot brook our mere carnal advances and earthly tokens of affection, but must be worshipped in spirit and in truth.

And now, my soul, turn thee to JESUS ; many a sorrowing soul has heard his name pronounced

by his Saviour's voice, and many a "Rabboni" is uttered with tears of joy. Turn thee to **JESUS**: He is nigh; He manifests Himself to all; and His Easter salutation sounds through thee: "He is gone before thee." O get up, and be doing: He bids thee follow Him.

I come, **LORD JESUS**, I come.

Tuesday
IN EASTER WEEK.

**ABIDE WITH US : FOR IT IS TOWARD EVENING, AND THE DAY
IS FAR SPENT. — St. Luke, xxiv. 29.**

GIVE me grace, O merciful LORD, so to pass on my pilgrimage through this life, that, when the night comes when no man can work, I may be found in faith and watchfulness holding on my road, and ready to meet my Saviour whenever He may appear; Grant this, LORD, I beseech Thee, for the same our LORD JESUS CHRIST's sake. *Amen.*

It is towards evening; the sun is about to set, which has seen such glorious things; and two men are walking on the lonely mountain path, absorbed in earnest conversation. They are going towards Emmaus, and they appear to be of an humble class. They are sorrowful; they look disquieted and anxious; they are dis-

cussing the events which have lately occurred at Jerusalem. Their best hopes, their brightest prospects, are fled ; they are buried in the tomb of JESUS. Where are their hopes ? on whom can they bestow their love, now that JESUS is dead ? Their LORD is dead ! If they could but have seen His corpse in the tomb they would have some definite cause for their sorrow ; but they found the grave empty, and their minds were filled with distrust and perplexity.

While they thus converse, JESUS draws nigh unto them. O gracious Saviour, when we are in doubt and perplexity, Thou dost often approach us when we least suspect Thy presence ; Thou dost lead us gently on from the perplexing mazes of doubt and uncertainty ; Thou dost bring us forth into the verdant pastures of Thy Word, and give us to drink of the waters of comfort. Strange that we discern Thee not ! but when our eyes are opened, how affecting then appear the many tokens of Thy fostering care and tender love, displayed in the warnings, the voice from within, the looks of friends, the aid even of inanimate nature, to check, to soften, to convert !

"Their eyes were holden that they should not know Him.

"And He said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?"

God does not want to know the heart of man; but He asks questions, graciously intending thereby, that we should pour out our hearts to Him, and be fitted to receive His grace, and His teaching. And so it was with these disciples, for the Unknown began to pour into their ears such wonders, as He opened unto them the vast scheme of man's redemption, that they were astonished, and marvelled what manner of Man had condescended to keep them company on their road. Still their eyes were holden; and when they reach the end of their journey, He makes as if He would go further, but they constrained Him, saying, "Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent." They felt that they could not part from Him; for He had inspired them with feelings, He had put thoughts into their hearts, which drew them towards Him, as towards their own dear Master.

Yes, LORD, abide with us; it is towards the

evening of the world; we are now looking for and hasting unto the Judgment-day; leave us not, but tarry with us to strengthen us for our final struggle, to inspire us with hope for the future.

The Stranger remains; it is the hour of the evening meal, and the Guest is invited to partake. What must have been their astonishment, when, in the breaking of bread, they recognize the very action, the tone, the manner of their beloved Master? They gaze upon Him, and as the sun appears from behind a cloud, so did the heavenly features discover themselves to the awe-stricken disciples. It is indeed their LORD; He is risen! There He stands, in His glorious Majesty, but still their own, their long loved Master! They kneel, they worship, and they are dissolved in love and joy at His blessed feet; but as suddenly as He dawned upon them He is gone; their eyes behold Him no more; but where He found trouble and distrust, He has left joy and peace.

They then wondered that they had not recognized Him before: "Did not our heart burn within us, while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the Scriptures?"

No, my soul, it is not wonderful that they knew not their Lord; how often hast thou said, when thou hast received an unexpected answer to prayer, a sudden ray of light to brighten what appeared the most gloomy prospect: "Surely the LORD is in this place, and I knew it not!" Thou canst always be more acute in looking back to what has passed, than in detecting the Truth as it has been passing. Thou hast been sorrowful, and lonely, and hast found it hard to struggle with thy trials; but suddenly relief comes, thy Saviour reveals Himself, and thou art again strong in faith, and feelest joy and peace in believing. And will not this consciousness of our dear LORD's presence throw the light of eternity along thy appointed path, and dissipate its gloom?

Yes; it is not for us weak mortals to be blessed with the constant sight of our Saviour; when He has awakened us, and instructed us, and made us aware of His divine presence, then He leaves us, but the kindly light of His grace is ever shining round us. Let us open ourselves to its influence, and it will guide us through the night of this life to the eternal day, which will ere long dawn upon us from on high.

Do our hearts burn within us in meditating upon these great wonders?

They do burn within us, as again and again we hear and take up the Easter hymn: "The LORD is risen! the LORD is risen indeed! Hallelujah."



Wednesday
IN EASTER WEEK.

AND AS THEY THUS SPAKE, JESUS HIMSELF STOOD IN THE
MIDST OF THEM, AND SAITH UNTO THEM, PRAISE
BE UNTO YOU.—St. Luke, xxiv. 36.

O HOLY and eternal JESUS, Who hast overcome death and triumphed over all the powers of darkness, hell, and the grave, and manifested the truth of Thy promises, and the power of Thy divinity, by Thy glorious resurrection; preserve me, I beseech Thee, from eternal death, and make me to rise from the death of sin, and so to live the life of grace here, that I may partake of Thy glory hereafter. *Amen.*

The apostles are sitting round in a close circle; they have heard the wonderful news of the disciples from Emmaus, and they are sitting conversing; some are full of hope and of

faith ; some doubt and are disquieted. Suddenly they hear a voice in the midst of them : there was no sound of footsteps, no symptom of any one approaching ; noiseless as a shadow, sightless as in a dream, He is among them : "Peace be unto you !"

Stricken with terror, they start from their seats. They believe they see a spirit, an apparition from the other world, and they are pale and cold with dread. Oh, what love does the LORD bear to His own children ! He comes when they are all assembled, to bring them His peace ; and a glorious and heavenly peace is that which He sheds among His own ; it is not the salutation of the world, the false flattering peace which is driven away by the first breath, but the Peace of God, which passeth all understanding.

It is a deep, unutterable peace. Look at the LORD, as He stands before us after His resurrection ; how serene, how joyful He appears ; what a halo of pure, calm, holy joy surrounds Him ! All traces of former agony, all tears are done away. The lips which uttered, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful," and, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me," are never

again to move to such sounds of woe. No; the sorrow, the agony, the tortures, have purchased peace for His own, and He comes to bring it unto them.

But they are terrified and affrighted; just such are the barriers which exist in our hearts, and which prevent the peace of God from entering in! How many, who truly believe in and love the LORD JESUS, still are uneasy and anxious, fearful lest the world should hold too great a sway over them; unhappy when their feelings are not so alive as they would have them to be. Why is all this, but that the LORD is not wholly revealed to them; they are not enough acquainted with Him; they must see Him; examine Him; hear Him open unto them the wondrous mysteries of their hope in Him, their union with Him; and then the full tide of happiness pours into their souls; they take hold of that true and blessed peace; and they clasp it to them and feel that with it they can abide the shock of temptations, the snares of the devil, the taunts of the world, and the varied and pinching miseries of their earthly pilgrimage.

My soul, canst Thou receive thy Saviour's

salutation? retire within thyself and see; the world shut out, the avenues of the senses guarded, the doors closed: then, if thou canst bear that silence and that solitude, CHRIST will come unto thee; He will suddenly say, "Peace be unto thee." And if thy faith is strong and thy hope firmly set upon thy LORD, those words will enter into thy soul; the peace of God will be thine, and the Easter benediction will give thee strength to go forth on thy way rejoicing. Thou must go forth, thou canst not always remain in stillness and solitude. Peace thou mayest have even in this world, but *rest* there is none. When our LORD saluted His disciples He knew they would not always be engaged in prayer with closed doors, in the upper chamber; He gave them His peace when He foresaw the trials of cruel mockings and scourgings, of bonds and imprisonment, they would have to undergo; He foresaw that they would be stoned, and sawn asunder, and tempted, and slain with the sword; that they would have to wander about in sheepskins and goatskins, and would be destitute, afflicted, and tormented; yet He gave them His peace. And thou, my soul, wilt have to encounter fightings and fears,

Wednesday in Easter Week. 303

struggles within and trials without, temptations and afflictions: through all these thou must work thy way. Be of good cheer, thy Saviour is always near thee, His benediction is ever sounding in thy ears, and He is ever saying unto thee, "According to thy faith be it unto thee."

Thursday
IN EASTER WEEK.

BEHOLD MY HANDS AND MY FEET, THAT IT IS I MYSELF :
HANDLE ME, AND SEE ; FOR A SPIRIT HATH NOT
FLESH AND BONES, AS YE SEE ME HAVE. —
St. Luke, xxiv. 39.

O HOLY and eternal JESUS, Who hast overcome death, and triumphed over all the powers of darkness, hell, and the grave, and manifested the truth of Thy promises, and the power of Thy divinity, by Thy glorious resurrection ; preserve me, I beseech Thee, from eternal death, and make me to rise from the death of sin, and so to live the life of grace here, that I may partake of Thy glory hereafter. *Amen.*

Our LORD stands before His disciples, and they receive Him not with the joy we should have expected ; they were terrified, for they thought He was no real man, but an apparition

or spirit. But our blessed LORD has compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way, for He invites them to look upon the wounds in His hands and His feet, and also bids them to handle Him and see that He is flesh and bone. Here is accorded to the timid disciples what was withheld from Mary Magdalen. "Touch Me not"—restrained her over-ardent and, we may suppose, somewhat irreverent zeal. "Handle Me, and see"—encouraged the affrighted and wavering disciples. How merciful and loving is the LORD in thus taking such pains to convince his disciples; how does the Good Shepherd gently guide His infirm and wandering sheep; guiding them, and giving them by degrees power and strength to know Him, and to become acquainted with every particular respecting Him.

How mysterious it is that our LORD should bear about His wounds in His glorified Body after the Resurrection! What it can signify we cannot fully know now, but it bears with it quite enough to fill us with admiration and wonder, and to give us higher and holier ideas both of what CHRIST has done for us, and also what He is to us. The sight of those wounds

must at once have cleared the view of the disciples respecting the Resurrection ; they would from henceforth know and recognize the union in their LORD, of His intense sufferings and of His surpassing glory ; they would look forward to the time when in the presence of the FATHER those wounds would show forth the cause of the redemption He had purchased, and of the intercession He was continually making. They would also understand how those wounds would declare continual condemnation, and show forth the just damnation of His enemies.

And thou, O my soul, canst “handle Him, and see ;” those wounds were inflicted for thee ; hast thou now as little compunction for thy sins ? Are they not an encouragement to thee to endure thy little portion of sufferings in this life ? are they not a refuge to thee from troubles ? do not thy Saviour’s sufferings and death, brought so near to His resurrection and glory, furnish a happy thought, that even if thou hast to suffer, still a joyful change awaits thee ; that though sorrow endures for a night, joy cometh in the morning ? Oh, contemplate those blessed wounds, and bewail thy manifold sins ; contemplate them, and know that His wounds remain,

that thine may be healed ; He bears them that thou mayest be free from them ; He bears them that He may shew them to His Father and plead, that by His stripes we are healed.

And now, behold, He asks for something to eat, in order the more to certify to His disciples that it was the same Body which suffered, that rose again.

Other and more mysterious meanings were there in this action on which I forbear to meditate ; but that which at once strikes the mind on contemplating this wonderful period, is the nature of the human body. We may reverently believe that what our Saviour's Body was, such will ours be ; that though it may be tortured and mangled in this life, yet it will be raised glorious in the life to come—the same, and yet different.

O my Saviour, by Thy precious death kill all my corrupt and carnal affections ; by Thy burial bury my fallen, degraded nature ; by Thy resurrection raise me a changed and a glorious creature. O death, thy sting is gone ! O grave, thy victory is lost ! **CHRIST** is risen, and we are no longer vile and worthless, but glorious and very precious.

Friday

IN EASTER WEEK.

THEN WERE THE DISCIPLES GLAD, WHEN THEY SAW THE LORD. THEN SAID JESUS TO THEM AGAIN, PEACE BE UNTO YOU : AS MY FATHER HATH SENT ME, EVEN SO SEND I YOU.—St. John, xx. 20, 21.

O HOLY and eternal Jesus, Who hast overcome death and triumphed over all the powers of darkness, hell, and the grave, and manifested the truth of Thy promises, and the power of Thy divinity, by Thy glorious Resurrection ; preserve me, I beseech Thee, from eternal death, and make me to rise from the death of sin, and so to live the life of grace here, that I may partake of Thy glory hereafter. *Amen.*

The apostles now begin to assume a new and a higher interest in our eyes. With the exception of St. Thomas, they had now had all

their doubts removed. They had witnessed the sufferings and death of their LORD, and had seen Him laid in the grave. We may suppose that these occurrences had in some degree shaken their faith; but they still had lingered in the neighbourhood of the tomb, in hopes that some great event would occur. When they were summoned to the grave by the more vigilant women, they saw that He Whom they trusted would have redeemed Israel was gone; and though to some among them the LORD vouchsafed to shew Himself, yet the greater part had repaired to the room of meeting on the evening of the great day, sorely perplexed and very sorrowful. With these feelings in their minds, we may easily imagine how terrified they must have been when suddenly they heard the well known voice in the very midst of them! When He graciously proceeded to satisfy them of His identity, they must have felt joy gradually spring into their hearts; and as they watched Him, while partaking of the food He had demanded of them, the gradual swell of conviction, the slow drawing aside of the veil which had been over their hearts, the tide of faith

and love setting into their souls, are well expressed by the Evangelist: "Then were the disciples glad when they saw the LORD." Glad, indeed, and beyond expression they must have been; but beyond gladness there must have been a work going on in the souls of those unlettered and simple men, to fit them for the great commission which the LORD was about to give them. Their eyes first began the work; for, as they gazed upon their Master, and drew a parallel between His present glorified condition and His former life of labour, they would connect one with the other; His works, His miracles, and His discourses — all and each held in distinct remembrance — are connected with His resurrection and His present actions; and the links which bind them are those wounds which are very dear and precious evidences and seals to all His former actions, all His present mysterious, noiseless, and yet powerful works.

The work is begun; faith and love are there; and the heavenly benediction again sounds in their ears: they now receive it in a higher and fuller sense; and in awe and reverence they

hear their God conferring upon them a peace which is to make them "beautiful," and which they are to diffuse and shed abroad among all people.

And now observe the LORD, the Second Person of the holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, breathing on His own the breath of life! From henceforth those men have *living* souls! They, from henceforth, communicate to all who are dead in trespasses and sins, the breath of life; for as He Who can bestow life can also take it away, so He gives His commission to these His apostles, to remit sins and to retain them, with the same authority as if He had Himself done it. Awful power given to CHRIST's ministers! They who have so closely watched their LORD, they who have handled Him, and seen Him eat, must surely stand very near to the gate of heaven: with their hand on the key, they now have the power of opening to those whose sins are remitted; but they also have the power of shutting against those whose sins are retained.

O LORD, this is an awful power delegated by Thee to Thine apostles, and through them to

the ministers of Thy holy Church ! Can any, on whom Thy holy breath has passed, misuse their trust ? If there be any such, LORD, have mercy on them ! They hold open the gate for others, but they can in no wise enter in themselves.

Saturday

IN EASTER WEEK.

AND AFTER EIGHT DAYS AGAIN HIS DISCIPLES WERE WITHIN,
AND THOMAS WITH THEM : THEN CAME JESUS, THE DOORS
BEING SHUT, AND STOOD IN THE MIDST, AND SAID, PEACE
BE UNTO YOU.— St. John, xx. 26.

O HOLY and eternal JESUS, Who hast overcome death, and triumphed over all the powers of darkness, hell, and the grave, and manifested the truth of Thy promises, and the power of Thy divinity, by Thy glorious Resurrection ; preserve me, I beseech Thee, from eternal death, and make me to rise from the death of sin, and so to live the life of grace here, that I may partake of Thy glory hereafter. *Amen.*

A week passed after the Resurrection of our LORD, and we read of no manifestation, until the following first day of the week, when again the disciples were met together, and Thomas

was with them. It is probable that this and timid disciple had not joined his panions after their dispersion, until after LORD's manifestation of Himself to them the preceding Sunday. That the apostle told Thomas of all that had occurred, we feel quite sure; but, alas! he refused to credit to the marvellous account, and declared that nothing but touching the wounds in his blessed hands, and feeling with his own hand the wound in His side, would induce him to believe that his Master was indeed come again to them.

Accordingly they were all gathered together in the upper room; there where that last supper was eaten; where they had all partaken the Eucharistic mystery; where they had listened to their LORD's last ministerial discourse and had seen the true Paschal Lamb Himself ready for the sacrifice; there where the hymn of thanksgiving had risen, declaring the right hand of the LORD bringeth many things to pass; there where they had re-assembled on the evening of the day of days, where their eyes had been again satisfied gazing on their beloved LORD, and where

souls had been endued with much strength; there they met together again: what holy thoughts must have been theirs in that upper room; how fervent the prayers they there offered to their God! While they are thus engaged, behold, He comes again! as God He comes! His footsteps are not known: He stands in the midst, and says, "Peace be unto you."

Immediately He singles out Thomas; a few simple and commanding words are uttered: "Reach hither thy finger, and behold My hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into My side: and be not faithless, but believing." These are Thomas's own words! What divine knowledge! He is Omnipresent! His command is simple, it is also majestic; such is not to be disobeyed, and we may see St. Thomas actually passing his hand to the several parts of the Divine Person, as indicated. When this was done, who can picture the overwhelmed, the repentant, the believing, the adoring Thomas? Those words must have been uttered while falling at His Master's feet: "My LORD and my God!"

This is the very fulness of faith, and yet no blessing attends Thomas's confession, as it did

Peter's, for it required much evidence, and of the most material kind, to bring about confession, full and uncompromising as

"Blessed are they who have not seen yet have believed." O my soul, what comfort there is in this blessing; what loving-kindness of our LORD to bring forth out of the weakness of one of His own disciples, such strengthening consolation for as many as believe, unto the end of the world! Thou hast not seen, yet blessed be God, thou hast received such confirmation from Holy Scripture, that not to believe is to be madness and folly; still thy LORD pronounces a blessing, and as thy opportunities have been great, thy proportion of faith will be large.


O LORD, I believe; help Thou my weakness; assist me to act according to my faith. A careless and a distracted mind will not be pleasing to Thee. O let me think on Thy mercies, Thy loving-kindness; let me give my imagination on the wounds which Thou hast received for me, and let me, with St. Thomas, believe and adore.

First Sunday after Easter.

THIS IS THE DAY WHICH THE LORD HATH MADE ; WE WILL
REJOICE AND BE GLAD IN IT.— Psalm cxviii. 24.

O GLORIOUS JESUS, in Whom we live,
and without Whom we die ; mortify in
us all sensual desires, and quicken our hearts
with Thy holy love, that we may no longer
esteem the vanities of the world, but place our
affections entirely on Thee, Who didst die for
our sins and rise again for our justification.
Amen.

What thoughts will henceforth be the Apostles' on the return of the first day of the week !
The two first Sundays were, we know, chosen
by our LORD as the days of His appearing. The
first, that day of days, the birthday of all our
hopes, was full of the majesty of His glory ;
the second was chosen by Him for His appearance
to St. Thomas ; and we may therefore



resurrection is especially kept up; brightness of Easter sheds an especial light on each Sunday as it comes round in the days.

We no longer commemorate the seven days with other ordinances of the Jews; it is laid in the tomb of CHRIST; and instead there has risen with Him this, a bath of grace. The change of the Sabbath has not been proclaimed with the thunder and mighty whirlwinds, and devouring fire accompanied the delivery of the Law; still small voice, a noiseless step, unknown movements, like those of our LORD after His resurrection, have established the Lord's Day as a day of rest and

calm, peaceful and full of hope, alike for those who mourn over the tomb of buried joys, and for those who look forward with youth's bright glance to dawnings of happiness in an undiscovered country, which they expect to find in this life, but which they will only reach in the life to come.

If we wake early in the morning, the first thought that meets us is the tomb, and the stone rolled away, and the angel; here is the first rosy tint of dawn. Then we see the women, and we enter into the tomb with them, and we see the grave clothes lying wrapped together in wonderful order, and the angels; and we then go without to Mary Magdalene, and we see her tears, and thank God that ours need not so be shed. Then we see the LORD! The Sun of Righteousness bursts forth upon our adoring gaze: "Rabboni!" O LORD JESUS, my GOD and my LORD; I worship Thee, I praise Thee, I give thanks to Thee for Thy great glory!

The evening and the morning are the first day; and as evening approaches we are on the road to Emmaus; the Stranger approaches. Is

He still a Stranger to us? Do not our hearts burn? Are we still doubtful? He will reveal Himself in breaking of bread. Abide with me, gracious LORD; I am weary and heavy laden; I mourn and am disquieted that the day is so far spent, and I am not better prepared for the end of my pilgrimage; abide with me, LORD, and purify me by Thy blessed presence; make me to return with joy to my brethren, and relate the wondrous things Thou doest for Thine own.

Then with the disciples in the upper room, with closed doors, let me hear Thy salutation, "Peace be unto you."

What a blessed end to a blessed day! CHRIST bestows His peace!

It is thine, O my soul, if thou follow thy LORD, and obey all His commands; it is not thine, if thou let in the world, and give thy LORD half thine heart, and a divided service.

Follow the way that leads to truth; follow the truth that leads to life.

Follow the steps of thy beloved JESUS, Who alone is the Way, and the Truth, and the Life.

Follow His holiness in what He did, and His patience in what He suffered.

Follow thy faithful LORD, O my soul, to the end ; and thou art sure in the end to possess Him for ever.

AFTER FIRST SUNDAY

AFTER THESE THINGS JESUS SHEWED HIM
THE DISCIPLES AT THE SEA OF TIBERI
St. John, xxi. 1.

O GLORIOUS Jesus, in Whom
and without Whom we die,
quicken us all sensual desires, and quicken
with Thy holy love, that we may
esteem the vanities of the world, but
affections entirely on Thee, Who dost
forgive our sins and rise again for our justification.
Amen.

Our Lord had commanded His

and sufferings, the scene of so many of their adored Master's labours and miracles; the scene, in all probability, of most of their childish sports, and of the toils of their riper years. How blessed for them to have their earlier recollections mixed up with their Lord! And now that they have passed through the dark passage of His sufferings and death, in the busy stir and heartless noise of the city, how must they have rejoiced again to have that clear calm sea before them; the hills and vales, the rich pastures and verdant woods, all beaming bright in the Easter sun; for we all know how the heart's happiness casts a rich glow upon the inanimate objects around us! We are not told why the disciples resumed their trade after so long a cessation; perhaps it was necessary to their subsistence. However, it might have been, Peter, who is the head and leader in all their proceedings, says, "I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately;" probably in the evening, as most fishermen do; "and that night they caught nothing."

The day dawned, and as the well-known

scenes gradually revealed themselves in the grey twilight, they observed that a Stranger was standing on the shore. They knew not that it was Jesus, but He was watching them, and knew that their labour had been in vain.

How touching, how consolatory it is to those who are toiling and labouring through this world, and living a life of care, in a calling which takes up all the attention and all the thoughts, and in which disappointments are frequent, and prosperity rarely, if ever, met with, to know that there is a time when Jesus Himself will draw nigh to us. Although we are still on the troubled waters of this world, He is on the quiet shore which we can only perceive as by twilight; He stands and draws our attention to Him, but we know Him not; we are not yet near enough to Him, and our senses are not yet purified enough to discern Him; but He is there, knowing how we are toiling, seeing our difficulties, searching our inmost thoughts, scrutinizing our intentions. What a comfort to feel that our worldly labours may be thus sanctified, and indeed *are* so sanctified; for it is only by our way of entering into them that we desecrate them.

JESUS stands on the shore of the heavenly country. LORD, I know Thou art there, and that Thou seest me; grant that through trials and dangers, through temptations and disappointments, I may still toil on with unwearied diligence, until I attain that shore, where I may rest for ever in the bosom of my Saviour, in the presence of my God. Oh, Rest and Peace! what happy Easter words are these! how unfit are they for the lips of those who are yet in the world! how appropriately do they come to those who are struggling to attain the shores of the kingdom of heaven. My soul thirsts, my flesh longs to enter into rest, but I have not yet toiled all night; I still have caught nothing; and if ever I do get rest and peace, JESUS Himself must give them me; I have earned nothing for myself.

O LORD JESUS, look upon me Thy unworthy servant; and grant me Thy peace in this world, rest and refreshment in the world to come!

Tuesday

AFTER FIRST SUNDAY.

CHILDREN, HAVE YE ANY MEAT. — St. John, xxi. 5.

O GLORIOUS JESUS, in Whom we live, and without Whom we die; mortify in us all sensual desires, and quicken our hearts with Thy holy love, that we may no longer esteem the vanities of the world, but place our affections entirely on Thee, Who didst die for our sins and rise again for our justification. *Amen.*

The Stranger on the shore calls to the disciples in the ship, as an affectionate father questions his family concerning their welfare, "Children, Have ye any meat?" They answer Him, "No." Strange that they do not recognize Him! but perhaps He is not to be recognized until the miracle shall have opened their minds to the knowledge of His presence.

“He said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find.” Here, I cannot but remark the difference between this miracle, and the similar one which took place during our LORD’s ministry on earth: there, the net was cast indiscriminately, and gathered of all sorts; here the net is cast in a particular spot, the right side being the place of strength or honour, as it is written, “The right hand of the LORD hath the pre-eminence; the right hand of the LORD bringeth mighty things to pass.” And the successful draught is of a particularly large sort of fish, the numbers of which are given, and which are not drawn into the boat, but are dragged after the disciples to the shore.

The fish are enclosed in the net, and then the piercing eye of love discovered his LORD to St. John: “It is the LORD!” When Simon Peter heard that it was the LORD, the zeal which caused him to walk on the waters and to venture into the hall of Caiaphas, and to enter the grave, made him cast his fisher’s coat about him, fling himself into the sea, and swim to meet his dearest LORD. Here let me remark the constant, never-failing distinctive-

ness in the two characters of St. John and St. Peter. St. John's, the love of a friend, always watching and waiting, and leaning on the bosom of his LORD; St. Peter's, the love of a disciple, always eager to be first, dashing onward through dangers and difficulties, and pressing to the side of his Master.

The other disciples came after, in a little ship, dragging the net with the fishes. On the shore there was a fire, and fish laid thereon, and bread. Here is another miracle; the mysteries of this wondrous time are very deep; we cannot understand them now. Grant, O LORD, that when Thou hast drawn us to Thy heavenly shore, Thou wilt reveal to us the mysteries of Thy kingdom, and wilt feed us with heavenly food, and warm us with the fire of Thy presence.

The net is brought to land — it has been waiting until the appointed time when the LORD commanded it to be brought; and the fish are numbered; the number, a hundred and fifty and three, no doubt is of great significance; but I pause to consider the awful nature of this miracle, bringing before me, as it does, the final separation of the elect of God, chosen

from the place of eminence, that is, the right side of the ship, enclosed and kept separate, and finally brought to the shore where our LORD is waiting to receive them.

O LORD, make me to be numbered with Thy saints in glory everlasting.

This prayer I can make mine truly; but I must consider whether I am prepared to go through the great tribulations, which the saints of God must undergo? Can I suffer all things for the sake of CHRIST? Can I endure the struggles and the warfare, the blood-shed, the persecution, which we are foretold will come before the time of restitution shall arrive? In the meanwhile can I wait and watch, and patiently take the every-day trials, which, as they are small, are doubly trying? Oh, it is sad, it is grievous, to see the net of our Church torn and rent and divided! But be of good cheer, my soul! if thou canst endure, thou knowest that the net which is now hidden in the deep waters cannot be rent; and in that, if thou art faithful, thou wilt be drawn to the blessed shores, on which thou mayest gaze with thy mind's eye, and, as in dim twilight, thou mayest see the flickerings of the fire; then thou mayest discern

the food which causes all hunger to be done away; then thou mayest see thy LORD, Who so graciously, so lovingly provides such good things for His elect.

Wednesday
AFTER FIRST SUNDAY.

JESUS SAITH UNTO THEM, COME AND DINE. —
St. John, xxi. 12.

O GLORIOUS JESUS, in Whom we live, and without Whom we die; mortify in us all sensual desires, and quicken our hearts with Thy holy love, that we may no longer esteem the vanities of the world, but place our affections entirely on Thee, Who didst die for our sins and rise again for our justification.
Amen.

This gracious invitation, after the labour of the disciples, must have been received with thankfulness and accepted with awe.

Behold them as they sit round the feast, prepared for them by the loving consideration of their LORD.

I may understand the state of their feelings

by the expression of the Evangelist : "None of the disciples durst ask Him, Who art Thou? knowing that it was the LORD." In silence, therefore, they sit, and with love and thankfulness they watch their LORD as He breaks the bread, His action in so doing being peculiar to Himself, and being the same which revealed Him to the disciples at Emmaus. With awe and wonder they look on Him; the meal passes, and not a word is spoken; He strengthens and refreshes their bodies, before He begins to pour instruction and wisdom into their souls. O LORD, how careful and loving Thou art of Thine own children! Thou art ever supplying them with things necessary for the body, as Thou art ever pouring Thy graces and blessings into their souls.

This care of our LORD for the due supply of food for those who are with Him, and which is exhibited in two miracles before His Passion, besides the one I am now considering, ought to suggest to me the thought, that the body for which our dearest LORD cared so tenderly, ought not to be neglected by me. Let me, therefore, hold my body in honour, not only as the purchase of my Saviour with His own

Wednesday after First Sunday. 333

blood, but because He has shewn such care of His disciples and followers. Let me run into no extremes respecting my body, neither denying it those necessities which are requisite for its health ! nor so pampering it as to render it unfit for the service of Him, for Whose glory it ought to be employed. LORD, let my every action be dedicated to Thy special service ; let my whole self, spirit, soul, and body, be Thine ; and grant, LORD, that it may be solely employed in setting forth Thy glory, and setting forward the great work of Thy Church on earth.

The former part of this miraculous period I have considered as setting forth a type of the final gathering in of the Church, and the separating the elect for the mansions prepared for them in heaven.

The dinner on the shore, and the marriage supper of the Lamb, bear a striking analogy to each other ; and as we reflect upon the awe and the joy of the disciples in being present with their glorified Master, we may bear in mind that "blessed are they which are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb."

Yea, blessed indeed are they, who, having

stood the tribulations of the latter days, shall find themselves safely landed on the shores of eternity, in the presence of their LORD, with an innumerable company of every tongue and people and nation. The awe and the joy of that time no tongue can tell; the twilight shore, which now we see so dimly, will then shine with the light of the LORD GOD Himself, and they shall reign there for ever and ever.

Hallelujah, for the LORD GOD Omnipotent reigneth.

The kingdoms of the world are become the kingdoms of our LORD and of His CHRIST; and He shall reign for ever and ever, King of kings and LORD of lords!

Hallelujah!

Thursday

AFTER FIRST SUNDAY.

SIMON, SON OF JONAS, LOVEST THOU ME MORE THAN
THESE ? — St. John, xxi. 15.

O GLORIOUS JESUS, in Whom we live,
and without Whom we die; mortify in
us all sensual desires, and quicken our hearts
with Thy holy love, that we may no longer
esteem the vanities of the world, but place our
affections entirely on Thee, Who didst die for
our sins and rise again for our justification.
Amen.

When they had dined, and our LORD had
strengthened and refreshed His disciples with
that miraculous food which He had created for
their use; we may see Him turning to Simon
Peter, and, with solemn and awful earnestness,
putting this question to him, "Simon, son of
Jonas, lovest thou Me more than these?"

This question, put to the once boastful and presumptuous Peter, receives at once a firm assent for answer: "Yea, LORD, Thou knowest that I love Thee." Here is a different answer from the proud, defiant speeches of Peter, when his LORD, in former times, had probed his faith and love. Let me remark the Good Shepherd's care for His flock; they are very dear to Him, and He will give them in charge to none but to those whose love to Him will cause them to gently lead the little ones in His fold; it is the weak, and the tender, and the young, for whom our LORD's first care is taken: "Feed My lambs." Again our LORD puts the question: "Lovest thou me?" and again the same answer is returned: "Feed My sheep," is the still higher injunction given.

But on the third time of the same question being put, "Peter was grieved;" was there not in the three questions an allusion to the three-fold denial of Peter? And did not Peter acknowledge that such searching was a needful and just rebuke, by appealing to His LORD's Omniscience? And then, by our LORD's repeating His injunction, does He not imply that His divine scrutiny has satisfied Him that

Peter's love will enable him to fill the high office of feeding His flock?

Yes, indeed, this discourse shews us that love is the one thing needful in tending CHRIST's flock. Without charity, or love, no work has vitality; but with this holy flame enkindled within, with CHRIST for our only and dearest Master and LORD, all things are possible; and love can accomplish wonders beyond what otherwise could be conceived.

Through CHRIST, then, we look upon all those that are CHRIST's; and our love to Him renders all those whom He has called to be His sheep very precious.

My soul, CHRIST asks this question of thee, "Lovest thou Me?" In some senses, every one is a minister in CHRIST's fold; to each some mission is given; and by the manner in which he fulfils that mission, he either helps to feed CHRIST's sheep, or he takes part with wolves in scattering them. Let me consider what my mission is, either as young or as old, as rich or as poor, as husband or wife, as parent or child, as teacher or scholar, as master or servant; and in whatever capacity I may be, CHRIST asks, "Lovest thou Me?"

O my soul, canst thou say with Peter,
"Yea, LORD, Thou *knowest* that I love Thee?"
Thou, Who knowest the heart, search me and
try; O give me Thy love. My soul thirsts,
my flesh longs for Thee. How willingly would
I say, "Yea, LORD," but I dare not; I will
look to the Cross; I will look to the grave;
when I have gone through that fearful trial, I
may hope to say, with Peter's confidence,
"Yea, LORD, Thou knowest that I love Thee."

Friday

AFTER FIRST SUNDAY.

THEN THE ELEVEN DISCIPLES WENT AWAY INTO GALILEE,
INTO A MOUNTAIN WHERE JESUS HAD APPOINTED
THEM.—St. Matthew, xxviii. 16.

O GLORIOUS Jesus, in Whom we live,
and without Whom we die; mortify in
us all sensual desires, and quicken our hearts
with Thy holy love, that we may no longer
esteem the vanities of the world, but place our
affections entirely on Thee, Who didst die for
our sins and rise again for our justification.
Amen.

When our LORD shewed Himself to the
women after His Resurrection, He bade them
tell His disciples to go into Galilee, and there
He would meet them. It is not revealed to
us when he told His disciples the precise spot
of their meeting, neither are we permitted to

know on which mountain they thus assembled; enough is revealed for our instruction, and I heartily pray that God will enable me, by His heavenly grace, to use what He has vouchsafed to shew for the edification and raising of my soul.

In the epistle to the Corinthians, St. Paul says, "He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once;" and it was probably on this mountain of Galilee that the assembly gathered together to meet their LORD.

And He came; and they worshipped Him; but some doubted. Among so great a number of persons, I may easily suppose that some may have been weaker in faith than others; some may have heard of the wonders of the Resurrection, and may have expected to see an appearance of great and luminous splendour, and when He approached, seeing nothing to strike the external senses, they doubted. But Jesus, having convinced the eleven, leaves the rest to gather faith from His words, and to remain as witnesses to His commands to His apostles. He begins by declaring His Almighty power: "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth." His weakness

had been crucified, His power had raised Him, and He stood the Almighty Conqueror, having trampled down His enemies, and received the reward of His victory; riches and honour, and glory, and power, and might; absolute dominion over men, unbounded sway over devils, and having at His command millions of mighty cherubim. His chariots are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels, and He is about to be among them as in His holy place of Sinai; and He now declares His dominion, and bids all kings to bow before Him, and all nations to do Him service.

Blessed are we who have this all-powerful LORD for our Saviour; His will is done in heaven; O let it be our endeavour to do it more perfectly here on earth! We say how difficult it is; how beset we are with temptations and difficulties; but there are more with us, than there are against us; cannot the eyes of our faith open to our view the encampment of the Lord's hosts? Cannot we see His chariots and His horsemen ready to do battle against our enemies? O let us not be faint-hearted; our Saviour has all power, and if we are His, if we put ourselves under His banner,

and join ourselves to Him by love, and try to do His will in all things, He will encase us in an armour, which will resist all the fiery darts of the enemy: and then will wonders be shewn forth in us! for the meek shall inherit the earth; the poor in spirit shall possess the glorious kingdom of heaven; the mourners shall weep no more, their sorrow shall be turned into joy; the pure in heart shall behold their God; there shall be no more hunger nor thirst; trials and persecutions shall cease; and the kingdom of our LORD shall be established—a glorious and peaceable kingdom; and He Who reigns over it is Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

Saturday

AFTER FIRST SUNDAY.

GO YE THEREFORE, AND TEACH ALL NATIONS, BAPTIZING
THEM. — St. Matt. xxviii. 19.

O GLORIOUS Jesus, in Whom we live,
and without Whom we die; mortify in
us all sensual desires, and quicken our hearts
with Thy holy love, that we may no longer
esteem the vanities of the world, but place our
affections entirely on Thee, Who didst die for
our sins and rise again for our justification.
Amen.

This command was given to eleven men,
whom I have seen, during the course of our
LORD's ministry on earth, taken from among
the lowest class of society. The principal
among them were fishermen, and as we may
suppose, had not had the advantages of much
education; and yet it was to these eleven men

that our LORD issued His command to make disciples of all nations ; and it was these eleven men, with two added to their number in course of time, who literally did the work set them by their LORD. Through evil report and good report these men spread themselves over the whole surface of the then known portion of the globe, from India, where St. Thomas preached the gospel and laid down his life for the sake of Him Whom he tardily but earnestly acknowledged to be his LORD and his God, to Ethiopia, where St. Bartholomew lifted up his testimony to the truth of the gospel, and further on, to Britain, where St. Paul is said to have laboured in his late found Master's service. The history of the spread of the gospel is like a strain of heavenly music, which begins low and soft, now swelling, now dying away, but which at last reaches such a pitch of high wrought thrilling melody, that we are entranced with the beautiful sounds, and look round in wonder to see whence they proceed, and we are astonished to find the place so lately a blank chaos, filled with so orderly and beautiful a system, as to leave no part unfilled with its perfection. Their sound is gone out into all lands, and their words unto the ends of the world.

Can it indeed be of these few men that the words of prophecy have sounded so beautifully? it seems almost incredible, and yet how can we doubt, when their Master and LORD declares, that all power is given unto Him in heaven and in earth. He can transform the frail earthly vessels into vessels of most abundant honour, and can fill them with such supplies of grace that from them will flow the rivers of His mercies unto all kindred and tongues and people and nations: "Living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: and the LORD shall be King over all the earth."

"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth."

And thus were the apostles to go forth; "not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the LORD." They were to go forth and rouse the sleeping world, and to say, "Behold thy God!" They were to carry forth the Cross, and shew to all nations Him Who hangs there-

on; to shew them the streams of His blood, which flow for their cleansing; to exhort them to seek after that Crucified Saviour; to assist them to walk over the waters to get to Him; and when they see Him to shew them that He no longer hangs in agony; He no longer lies buried and hid from sight; but they proclaim with a voice like that of the archangel, "He is risen indeed;" for your sins He died, but for your justification He is risen.

Rise with Him all ye nations; cleave unto Him, for He only is holy; He only is the LORD; He only is CHRIST; and, with the HOLY GHOST, is most high in the glory of God the FATHER.

Second Sunday after Easter.

BAPTIZING THEM IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF
THE SON, AND OF THE HOLY GHOST. —

St. Matthew, xxviii. 19.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, heavenly FATHER, we give Thee humble thanks that Thou hast vouchsafed to call us to the knowledge of Thy grace and faith in Thee; increase this knowledge and confirm this faith in me evermore. Give me Thy Holy Spirit, that, being born again, and made an heir of everlasting salvation, I may finally attain Thy heavenly kingdom, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD, Who with Thee and the HOLY GHOST, liveth and reigneth, world without end. *Amen.*

Forasmuch as all men are conceived and born in sin, our LORD gave the commission to His apostles to baptize them, in order that they might be fit to enter His presence, and to receive the gifts purchased for all men.

Faith beholds in every child of Adam a traitor's offspring, inheriting a traitor's curse; a creature in whom all the seeds of evil are sown, although it may be they lie dormant for a season. Faith looks upon human nature as corrupt only in its stream, but in its fountain; and we see the fruits of this corruption in the sufferings and death of the most innocent, who are creatures to whom the sin of their fathers is imputed, before they have committed sin themselves.

Blessed be God, that while we are all dead in Adam, so that in Adam all die, so we are instructed that in CHRIST all are made alive; that though by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, yet, by the obedience of One man, many are made righteous!

The first Adam, from whom all by birth descend, brought sin and death into the world; the second Adam is the LORD from heaven. He Who from all eternity dwelt in glory with the FATHER, GOD the SON, came down from heaven, and without ceasing to be God, became Man also; He was made Flesh and dwelt among us; He took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness

man ; He was born in a stable ; He grew up in obscurity ; He laboured for His bread ; He was agonized ; He was crucified ; and by His blood-shedding, He made the atonement for our sins, and hath become the Mediator ; so that all they who are one with Him are one with God, since **JESUS**, the Man, is God also. Perfect Man and perfect God, two natures being united in the Person of our dear **LORD** and only Saviour **JESUS CHRIST**. If, then, we are brought to **CHRIST JESUS** our **LORD**, well is it with us ! He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life ; there is no other way to reconciliation with God, but by that true and living Way ; he that hath the **SON** hath life, and he that hath not the **SON** hath not life ; for although God has given us eternal life, yet that life is in His **SON**.

How gracious, how merciful, therefore, was this command of our **LORD** to baptize all nations ; without Him they were going to perdition ; He sent forth His heralds and proclaimed peace and deliverance from sin to all the world. The apostles were to make disciples of all nations, and then the great purifying process was to go forward ; the mass of mankind, impregnated with the curse and taint of sin,

were to be cleansed, hallowed, quickened, in spirit, soul, and body; to be saved from the dominion of the world, the flesh, and the devil; and to be received into the ark of CHRIST'S Church; having that glorious threefold Name written on their foreheads; and henceforth to be under the creating, redeeming, sanctifying influence of the Holy, Blessed, and Glorious TRINITY. And thanks be to GOD, that He has brought me to this salvation! How glorious and precious it appears on a review of the mighty question: How can I thank my GOD enough for all His benefits?

O keep me and sanctify me, gracious GOD, that my whole spirit, and soul, and body, may be preserved blameless until the coming of the LORD.

Monday

AFTER SECOND SUNDAY.

**GO YE THEREFORE, AND TEACH ALL NATIONS, BAPTIZING
THEM IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE
SON, AND OF THE HOLY GHOST. —
St. Matt. xxviii. 19.**

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God,
heavenly Father, we give Thee humble
thanks that Thou hast vouchsafed to call us to
the knowledge of Thy grace and faith in Thee;
increase this knowledge and confirm this faith
in me evermore. Give me Thy Holy Spirit,
that, being born again, and made an heir of
everlasting salvation, I may finally attain Thy
heavenly kingdom, through JESUS CHRIST our
LORD, Who with Thee and the HOLY GHOST,
liveth and reigneth, world without end. *Amen.*

The question which comes into the mind
when we speak of baptizing all nations, is,
Why, then, are infants baptized, when they

cannot either comprehend or perform the vows which are then made? There is no command in Scripture for baptizing infants; we can only say that Scripture does not prohibit it; and by its institution the Church reminds Christian parents of the doctrine of original sin, and of the fact that on account of the sinfulness of its nature, every child of Adam must be united to CHRIST, the only Saviour, the Mediator between God and man.

“As many as have been baptized unto CHRIST, have put on CHRIST,” and “we are buried with CHRIST in baptism;” “baptism doth now save us;” for as there is only one Saviour, baptism can only save, by engrafting us upon CHRIST, and uniting us to Him. Baptism admits us into the company of all faithful people, that mystical Body of which CHRIST is the Head, and so we are united to CHRIST Who is the SON of GOD; if we are by adoption made one with Him, Who is the SON of GOD, we are, by adoption, children of God, and heirs of salvation.

O blessed privilege for those who were born children of wrath, to be adopted by CHRIST and made children of grace! How can I question

why Christian parents hasten to wipe out the stain of original corruption, and to place their little ones in the safe keeping of their Saviour? Nothing but a positive bar, a decided prohibition could deter a parent from placing his child in such a happy position. No such prohibition occurs, but rather in its stead I hear the Saviour's voice saying, "Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not." And therefore the happy mother places her tender infant in the Everlasting Arms, and baptism unites it to Him from Whose precious side came water and blood, in token of the redemption and regeneration thus afforded to it.

In the infant is neither faith, nor love, nor knowledge, but the faith and love of others have done that for him, which, in due time, will enable him to seek for himself the graces which should adorn a child of God.

Woe, woe, be to careless parents! What will be their portion, if, after having been entrusted with the charge of God's own adopted children, they neglect to cultivate in them the grace given? Do they not trample under foot the Cross? Do they not count the Blood of

the Covenant an unholy thing? Do they not do despite unto the Spirit of God?

O that all the world would see the privileges within their reach, and the responsibilities with which they are surrounded!

We are members of CHRIST, children of God, inheritors of the kingdom of heaven; through our LORD JESUS alone we hope to be saved; but we must approach Him through the waters of baptism, as He has Himself commanded.

Let me and all mine so purify ourselves, as to be fit to present ourselves before Him; and let us in all things lovingly and implicitly obey His blessed Will.

Tuesday

AFTER SECOND SUNDAY.

USING THEM IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON, AND OF THE HOLY GHOST. — St. Matt. xxviii. 19.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, heavenly Father, we give Thee humble thanks that Thou hast vouchsafed to call us to knowledge of Thy grace and faith in Thee; ease this knowledge and confirm this faith in me evermore. Give me Thy Holy Spirit, O Lord, being born again, and made an heir of everlasting salvation, I may finally attain Thy heavenly kingdom, through JESUS CHRIST our Lord, Who with Thee and the HOLY GHOST, livest and reignest, world without end. *Amen.*

When considering Baptism, its nature and its requirements, let me not forget that the principal thing I have to reflect on is, how I have taken my solemn vow, promise, and profession?

I have been admitted into covenant with God; I have been made a fellow-heir with CHRIST: have I kept my engagements? have I, at all times remembered my solemn oath, and have I endeavoured to keep myself as the sworn servant and soldier of the LORD, Whose sign is on my brow, and Whose threefold Name is my passport to my inheritance above?

One article of my baptismal covenant is, to wage a perpetual war with the devil; to renounce him for ever, with all his works of darkness and sin, and all his pomps of worldly pride and vain glory, and to be God's faithful servant, with a strict allegiance to His divine Majesty. What has my life hitherto been?

Have I effectually renounced Satan? Have I waged continual war against that cruel tyrant, that mortal enemy of my God? Has he never taken possession of me by sin? Have I not been all my life long his slave? Have not his works, his pomps, had a great share in my thoughts, and in my affections, greater than my duty and allegiance to God?

Oh, how I dread my past disloyalty, and breach of my covenant! Let me rouse myself, and repent, and amend, for the day is far spent, and the night is at hand!

I am also to believe in, and adhere firmly to, all the articles of the Christian faith. How have I kept this promise? The faith which I was pledged to is not a barren faith, but “a faith that worketh by love;” a faith that shews itself by every action of the life, pervading and purifying every thought and word. The just man lives by faith. Has mine been such?

I have another baptismal engagement, which is, to live in obedience to God’s will and commandments all the days of my life. The commandments are, To love the LORD my God with all my heart, with all my soul, and with all my thoughts; and to love my neighbour as myself. God adopts me as His child, and He expects from me the obedience of a child, a love for Him above all things, and a desire of conforming to His Will. See by how many titles thou belongest to God, O my soul, and then tremble because thou dost not love, serve, and obey Him with all thy power.

O my soul, thou art His by creation, He made thee for Himself; thou art His by redemption, JESUS has bought thee with His own blood; thou art His by dedication, consecrated to Him at baptism; thou art His by all the

articles of the covenant then made in thy name. O my soul, make a firm resolve to keep thy baptismal vows ; consider thyself as God's own property ; thou art not thine own ; give thyself up to Him, and strive to live in all holy fear and obedience, in sobriety, contentedness, and purity, until the time when He will more perfectly unite Himself with His own, from whom He will never more be separated.

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Wednesday

AFTER SECOND SUNDAY.

TEACHING THEM TO OBSERVE ALL THINGS WHATSOEVER I
HAVE COMMANDED YOU. — St. Matt. xxviii. 20.

ALmighty and everlasting God, heavenly Father, we give Thee humble thanks that Thou hast vouchsafed to call us to the knowledge of thy grace and faith in Thee; increase this knowledge and confirm this faith in me evermore. Give me Thy Holy Spirit, that, being born again, and made an heir of everlasting salvation, I may finally attain Thy heavenly kingdom, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD, Who, with Thee and the HOLY GHOST, liveth and reigneth, world without end. *Amen.*

The disciples were not only to convert and baptize all nations, but to teach them to obey whatsoever our Lord had commanded His followers themselves to observe. In this I see the

progress of the true Christian, who is to add to faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge. After the reception of faith, then comes the cleansing from former sins, and upon that we must learn to walk on in all virtue and godliness of living; for which end we must have knowledge, and the true understanding of all our LORD's discourses and commands to His disciples will furnish that knowledge in abundance; the manna is spread out before us, and each is enabled to gather enough for his support, so that he who has small capacity has no lack, and he who is able to gather up much has nothing to spare.

But knowledge is of no avail, unless we use it in a becoming manner; if it begets pride, or vanity, or intemperate zeal, it is useless; "let your moderation be known to all men;" and to knowledge add temperance; to temperance let patience be added; for it requires great steadiness, great firmness of purpose, and great self control, to act quietly and uniformly, never giving way to inclination, but rigidly acting upon rule, and in the spirit of true obedience: then, if patience has her perfect work, therefrom will issue brotherly kindness and sympathy with the troubles and difficulties of others;

Wednesday after Second Sunday. 361

and thence we shall proceed to charity, the very bond of peace and of all virtues; and so we shall end by love, and thus fulfil our Lord's injunctions, "Love one another," and, "If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love."

It were not possible now to enumerate all our Lord's commands, or to deduce therefrom a perfect rule of conduct; but each word tells us, that we must search the Scriptures, that we must be earnest and diligent in gathering therefrom an exact knowledge of our duty, and then shall I say that obedience will follow? No; I would rather say that, upon a diligent study of our Lord's history, of all His labours and sufferings, of His discourses and His miracles, love will first enter our hearts—the devoted, earnest, enquiring, all-satisfying love, which will bend the whole spirit, soul and body, into obedience to the commands of so admirable a Master, and into an intense desire of union with Him.

And from this desire entering the soul, there will be some of our Saviour's words which will specially come uppermost in the thoughts, and suggest themselves as His chief and great-

eat command: "This do in remembrance of Me."

Oh, blessed words of our dearest Saviour! a call and a command to do ourselves the greatest favour that can happen to us; for in the Sacrament of His blessed Body and Blood, He gives us Himself to be our spiritual food and sustenance, and we do therein shew forth the memorial of His death until His coming again.

O my soul, let the instructions of thy Lord enter thee and take deep root; keep all the commandments He has delivered for thy guidance, and walk on thy way in unhesitating faith, unfailing obedience, and devoted love.

Thursday

AFTER SECOND SUNDAY.

AND, LO, I AM WITH YOU ALWAY, EVEN UNTO THE END
OF THE WORLD.— St. Matt. xxviii. 20.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, heavenly FATHER, we give Thee humble thanks that Thou hast vouchsafed to call us to the knowledge of Thy grace and faith in Thee; increase this knowledge and confirm this faith in me evermore. Give me Thy Holy Spirit, that being born again, and made an heir of everlasting salvation, I may finally attain Thy heavenly kingdom, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD, Who with Thee and the HOLY GHOST, liveth and reigneth world without end. *Amen.*


How can I realise and understand the depth of the meaning of these words? A full and positive declaration is here, that CHRIST will be present with His apostles even to the end of

the world; but as they were not to live for ever, I must search for the explanation in the accompanying sentences. In connexion with converting and baptizing all nations, the meaning assumes a wider sense, for the Apostles only began the work, which they left to others to accomplish; the work is not even yet finished, men are going to and fro in the earth, still converting and baptizing; and I may suppose that the declaration of CHRIST's presence extends to them also, and to those who are converted and baptized by them; in fact, to the visible Church upon earth. In His Church, then, I may count upon our LORD's perpetual presence, and to each member of the same I may suppose that He is near, and vouchsafes His gracious aid.

To those ministers of His, who have taken such solemn vows to feed His flock, and to be instant in season and out of season in instructing, rebuking, exhorting, I must look with reverence; they are specially endowed with their LORD's presence; and how much does a faithful minister need the continual help of Him Who alone can breathe life into his actions, and bless his exertions with success!

What support must the sense of our LORD's presence be to such ! But this is speaking individually. CHRIST's presence in His Church, is the great fact that He is the Head and we are the members ; that as the Head is in heaven, so are the members one by one thither ascending and forming the great Building of God, whose Chief Corner Stone is the LORD JESUS, which Building will be only complete when the number of the elect is accomplished. This is the point on which I would more specially dwell, and I conceive that therein I shall find more reasons for looking off self, and up to God ; more motives to individual purity and holiness ; more reasons for grappling with and overcoming the difficulties which beset our earthly path, than any mere selfish considerations of individual holiness and individual happiness would afford.

To be a member of the Body of which CHRIST is the Head ; what honour ! Oh, to be among the lowest, the most ignoble, if only I belong to CHRIST would be enough. But then how can I, sinful and impure as I am, ever hope to keep my station ; how can I hope to become a glorified member of the Body, which I have treated so lightly on earth ?



“Lo! I am with you.” Yea, now invisibly, but really and truly, not to be seen by mortal eyes, nor to be approached in this life; but in the world to come I may hope to see Him face to face; I may see Him as He is. Even now I need not be shut out from all perception of Him; for to believe in, to meditate upon, to understand, ardently to thirst after, to make Him the sole object of my best thoughts and desires—this is in some sense to see and to possess Him.

O LORD, fill me with the desire of loving Thee and possessing Thee; let my life be spent in Thy service, in prayer, in praises, in thanksgivings; for Thou alone art worthy of all honour and praise; without Thee I can do nothing; with Thee I hope to pass on until I reach the green pastures, and be guided to the waters of comfort.

Friday

AFTER SECOND SUNDAY.

TEACHING THEM TO OBSERVE ALL THINGS WHATSOEVER
I HAVE COMMANDED YOU : AND, LO, I AM WITH
YOU ALWAY, EVEN UNTO THE END OF THE
WORLD.—St. Matthew, xxviii. 20.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God,
heavenly Father, I give Thee humble
thanks that Thou hast vouchsafed to call me
to a knowledge of Thy grace and faith in
Thee; increase this knowledge and confirm
this faith in me evermore. Give me Thy Holy
Spirit, that, being born again, and made an
heir of everlasting salvation, I may finally
attain Thy heavenly kingdom, through JESUS
CHRIST our LORD, who with Thee and the
Holy Ghost, liveth and reigneth, world with-
out end. *Amen.*

Inspire my soul, O LORD my God, with a
holy desire of Thee, my chief good, that I may

so earnestly desire, as diligently to seek
so successfully seek, as to be happy in fi
Thee: make me so sensible of the hap
of finding Thee, as most devoutly to
Thee; so effectually to express that love,
make some amends for my past misdeed
hating and forsaking all former evil co
and entering upon a life of purity and ho
for the time to come.

Give me, O God, true repentance, a h
and contrite spirit; make my eyes a foun
of tears, and my hands liberal dispens
alms, and unwearied instruments of
works.

Thou art my King; reign sovereign i
heart; subdue and expel thence all reb
passions; fill me with good thoughts
kindle in me the bright fire of Thy lov

Thou art my Redeemer; beat down,
out the spirit of pride, and impart to
much mercy the treasure of Thy own
amplified humility and wonderful condescen

Thou art my Saviour; take from m
rage of anger, and arm me, I beseech
with the shield of patience.

Thou art my Creator; root out from

that rancour and malice whereby my nature is corrupted; and implant in me that sweetness and gentleness of temper, which may render me one made in Thine own image, and after the likeness of Thy divine goodness.

Thou art my most indulgent Father; O grant to Thine own child those best of gifts, a firm and right faith, a stedfast and well-grounded hope, and a never-failing charity.

Incline me to obey that which is good, and to comply with wholesome advice; enable me to bridle my tongue, and to restrain my hands from every evil action.

Suffer me not to insult the poor, to defame the innocent, to despise my inferiors, to fail in due affection to my friends and relations, or in kindness and compassion to my neighbours and acquaintance.

O my God, Thou fountain of mercy, I beg Thee, for the sake of the Son of Thy love, dispose me to the love and practice of kindness and mercy; that I may have a tender fellow-feeling for my brethren's afflictions, to apply myself cheerfully to rectify their mistakes, to supply their wants, to comfort their sorrows, to assist the oppressed, to right the injured, to

sustain the needy, to cheer the dejected, to pardon those who have offended me, to love those who hate me, to return good for evil, and to despise no man.

Give me grace to imitate Thee, O blessed Saviour, in all the virtues Thou didst exercise on earth; to obey in all things Thy commandments; and leave me not, O LORD, neither forsake me; remember Thy promise to Thy servants, and be with us to guide, to protect, to enlighten, until Thou shalt bring us to the end of our journey on earth; then, O blessed LORD, let me ascend with Thee, and live with Thee in life eternal, world without end. *Amen.*

Saturday

AFTER SECOND SUNDAY.

MY PRAISE SHALL BE OF THEE IN THE GREAT CONGREGATION :

I WILL PAY MY VOWS BEFORE THEM THAT FEAR

HIM.— Psalm xxii. 25.

AL M I G H T Y and everlasting God, heavenly Father, I give Thee humble thanks that Thou hast vouchsafed to call me to a knowledge of Thy grace and faith in Thee; increase this knowledge, and confirm this faith in me evermore. Give me Thy Holy Spirit, that, being born again, and made an heir of everlasting salvation, I may finally attain Thy heavenly kingdom, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD, Who, with Thee and the Holy Ghost, liveth and reigneth, world without end. *Amen.*

O my Saviour, how can I thank Thee as I ought, or what requital can I make for Thy

wonderful condescension? How is it possible indeed that sinful dust and ashes as I am meanest and most unworthy of all Thy creatures, should be capable of any return might bear proportion to that immeasurable love, which I am not capable so much worthily to conceive? What could be what could be said, or thought of, for benefit and salvation which Thou hast not omitted to do for me? From the sole of foot to the crown of Thy head, Thou plunge Thyself into sufferings and so that Thou mightest pluck me out, and raise me entirely from the deep waters, when the waves and storms of misery had overwhelmed me, and came in, as it were, even unto soul.

Thou countedst not Thy life dear unto me but didst pour out Thy soul unto death. I deem that forfeit life of mine, over which entering by sin had got dominion; and my life is thus made twice Thy gift, first by creation, and afterwards by redemption, can I make Thee better payment than by devoting my life entirely to Thee? For part of the debt, then, in which my life is

Saturday after Second Sunday. 373

cerned, somewhat I have, though very small, to offer Thee; but for Thine own life, so precious, and yet so exceedingly afflicted for my sake, I am utterly at a loss, and am sensible that it is not in the power of all mankind to make Thee any manner of compensation. If all the heaven and earth and its treasures were mine, they could not furnish anything as compensation for so vast a debt. Nor can even the little which I am bound and am qualified to do, be done without Thee; for if I give Thee anything at all, it is Thou that givest me the power to do so.

Thou art pleased to require that I should love Thee with all my heart, with all my soul, and with all my mind, and with all my strength; that as Thou hast commanded, and as Thou hast left me an example, so I should obey Thee, and walk in Thy steps. And can I dispute my engagement to live to Thee, Who hast condescended not only to live, but even to die for me? No, dearest Lord, I am duly sensible of the obligation, but sensible withal that this obligation can never be discharged without the assistance of Thy grace.

O draw me, then, that I may run after Thee;

knit my heart to Thee, that I may love Thy Name; and let my soul cleave to Thee, my LORD, for I am not sufficient of myself to do anything as of myself, but all the sufficiency is of God.

I will therefore hold me fast by my LORD, and in communion with that Body, with which He has promised to be present even to the end of the world, I will seek Him daily; I will resort to His house; I will receive the communion of His Body and Blood, and I will live here as a member of His Body on earth, the last and lowest, but still one to whom He has vouchsafed His grace, and who is an heir of His kingdom.

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Third Sunday after Easter.

DEARLY BELOVED, I BESEECH YOU AS STRANGERS AND PILGRIMS, ABSTAIN FROM FLESHLY LUSTS, WHICH WAR AGAINST THE SOUL. — 1 Peter, ii. 11.

SEND down, O God of our fathers, and LORD of mercy, send down Thy wisdom from Thy holy heaven, to be in me, and labour with me, and to teach me what is acceptable to Thee; that I may know mine end, and wisely choose my ways, and order my actions to my true happiness.

To Thee, O blessed JESUS, my tender Redeemer, my merciful LORD, I flee for succour; I acknowledge and adore Thee as my GOD; my faith, my hope, and all my desires are fixed in Thee alone; not as I would, indeed; for alas! my faith is imperfect, my hope feeble, my desires lukewarm and cold. O do Thou strengthen my weakness, supply my defects,

in flame my zeal; and where I cannot attain to what I ought, accept what I do, for what I would do if I were able.

Enable me, I humbly pray Thee, to abstain from the works of the flesh, which Thou hatest; to perform diligently the works of righteousness which Thou lovest; and both in the evil I decline, and in the good I perform, to seek not my own, but Thy glory. So shall my left hand be fastened, as it were, to Thy Cross by the nail of temperance, and my right hand by that of justice. Let my soul be continually exercising itself in the law of my God, directing all its thoughts, and casting all its cares upon Thee, and then I shall imagine my right foot fixed to this mystical tree of life, by the nail of prudence. Grant that my sensual affections may always continue in subservience to my reasonable mind; and suffer not the treacherous prosperity of the world to enervate my soul, nor its profitable adversities to turn me from the pursuit of eternal rewards. So shall I be safe from all unmanly fear, and unwholesome desires, and shall look upon my left foot to be nailed to Thy Cross, by the nail of fortitude. Work in me also some resemblance to Thy crown

of thorns, by wounding my spirit with true and tender compunction for my past sins, by a remorse effectual to repentance; by brotherly sympathy for the sufferings of Thy afflicted servants; by holy and active zeal for that which is well-pleasing in Thy sight; and by taking refuge under the shadow of Thy wings, whenever troubles or afflictions threaten or oppress me.

Oh, let me also sometimes taste of the sharpness of Thy vinegar; that in it I may be instructed how like an empty sponge is the world with all its flatteries, and how all that we love and desire in it will turn to sour and nauseous vinegar.

But above all, let Thy life-giving death be most exactly represented in my whole conversation, that I may be effectually dead unto sins after the flesh, but alive unto righteousness through the spirit. Let Thy Word, quick and powerful, pierce through my very soul, let it reach to the most secret thoughts and intents of my heart, and cut sharper than the keenest lance; that from my heart thus pierced may overflow the love of Thee, my dearest LORD, and charity to my fellow Christians.

Finally: wrap Thou my soul in the clean linen of innocence and holiness, that when it shall depart this mortal body, I may rest in peace and hope; that Thou mayest hide me in the bed of dust till Thy Father's wrath be overpast, and that when I wake up after Thy likeness, I may enter with Thee into the blissful mansions of Thy heavenly dwelling.

Monday

AFTER THIRD SUNDAY.

FOR IF WE HAVE BEEN PLANTED TOGETHER IN THE LIKENESS OF HIS DEATH, WE SHALL BE ALSO IN THE LIKENESS OF HIS RESURRECTION.—

Rom. vi. 5.

SEND down, O God of our fathers, and **L**ORD of mercy, send down Thy wisdom from Thy holy heaven, to be in me, and labour with me, and teach me what is acceptable to Thee; that I may know mine end, and wisely choose my ways, and order my actions to my true happiness. *Amen.*

On the third day, the day of rest, and when the eternal Sabbath shall begin to dawn, the triumphant Saviour, the **L**ORD of heaven and earth, shall restore all His redeemed ones to a new and better life. Then, O my soul, shalt thou see the Majesty of thy Redeemer, and be filled with the joy of His countenance. O my

most merciful Saviour and my God, hasten, I beseech Thee, that much-wished for day ; that what I now behold with the eye of faith, and as in a glass only, I then may see distinctly and as it were face to face ; what I now reach forward to with a distant hope, I then may be in actual possession of ; what I now desire according to my poor capacity, I then may grasp and hold fast, and have entire possession of.

O most gracious Saviour, to see Thee face to face ; to see Thee as Thou art ; to be made like unto Thee ! how can I picture to myself such glory, such happiness ? Fain would I expatiate on so delightful, on so glorious a theme ; and even now I can, feebly indeed, but truly, anticipate the joys of Thy most glorious Presence ; but words are too weak, and thoughts too narrow for such a subject. I am lost when I begin the contemplation of the vast future, of which Thou Thyself art the Sun and Centre ; the brightness of Whose Majesty, the dazzling beauty of Whose Presence, prevents the eyes of a weak mortal from gazing ; rather will I veil my face, and fall prostrate adoring Thee, for Thy condescension in receiving such as I

Monday after Third Sunday: 381

am ; in suffering what I never can suffer, and in raising me from the mire and clay of my original and corrupt nature, and making me capable of living near Thee, and becoming one of Thine own children.

Praise then the LORD, O my soul, and magnify the mercies of the compassionate JESUS. Tell it out among all the world how exceeding gracious He hath been to thee, and give Him the honour due unto His Name ; for His Name only is excellent, and His praise above heaven and earth.



Tuesday

AFTER THIRD SUNDAY.

AND AGAIN, A LITTLE WHILE, AND YE SHALL SEE ME. —
St. John, xvi. 16.

SEND down, O God of our fathers, and LORD of mercy! send down Thy wisdom from Thy holy heaven, to be in me, and labour with me, and to teach me what is acceptable to Thee; that I may know mine end, and wisely choose my ways, and order my actions to my true happiness. *Amen.*

I am now a pilgrim, walking on my way through this vale of tears; I walk by faith, and not by sight; I know that my LORD and Saviour has been on earth, and that He has purchased for me a better state, an inheritance incorruptible, and which fadeth not away; and He is now gone to prepare a place for me;

during His absence I walk on a solitary orphan, dreading every danger in my path, and fearing to be beguiled from the right way; this is my present condition, but it will not last always. For when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away; then I shall with open face behold the glory of the LORD, and be changed into the same image with Him I behold. What then shall hinder me, whom Thou hast already crowned with hope, and shalt hereafter crown with glory and honour, from being now but a little lower than the angels?

Thou hast declared that they "which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world and the resurrection from the dead," "are equal to the angels and are the children of God." Children of God in the most beneficial sense, if equal to the angels; and sons of God, because the SON of God was made the Son of Man. The consideration of this mystery gives me boldness to say that man is not only little lower than angels, but that he is equal, and even in some respects superior to angels, in that Man, not Angel, was God, and that God vouchsafed to become Man.

This is that glory in which I rejoice; this thought eases me of the burdens which the world imposes, and gives me much courage to endure. But even if it is but a little while until our LORD comes and unites Himself to us again, and gives us the reality of those good and glorious things of which we now have the promise; can I, and I ask the question seriously and hesitatingly, can I endure unto the end, and under all trials? Thanks be to God, that though our blessed LORD is absent from our sight for a season, yet He is still our Advocate with the Father; His righteousness is imputed unto us, if we possess that active, living faith by which we have power to become the sons of God.

I will magnify Thy name, O LORD, for that by creating me in Thine own image, after Thy likeness, Thou hast given me a capacity of such excellent glory as to become a child of God; and, O my gracious Saviour, of Thine infinite mercy grant that when Thou shalt shortly come to gather Thy children unto Thee, I may be among those who shall lift up their heads, seeing that their redemption draweth nigh.

Grant that when I shall see the "sign of the

Tuesday after Third Sunday. 385

Son of Man" in the heavens, I may rejoice with exceeding joy, knowing that I am about to see Thee, my Saviour, Whom I now humbly beseech to save Thy servant; to govern me and lift me up for ever !

Wednesday

AFTER THIRD SUNDAY.

VERILY, VERILY, I SAY UNTO YOU, THAT YE SHALL WEEP
AND LAMENT, BUT THE WORLD SHALL REJOICE : AND YE
SHALL BE SORROWFUL, BUT YOUR SORROW SHALL
BE TURNED INTO JOY.— St. John, xvi. 20.

SEND down, O God of our fathers, and
LORD of mercy, send down Thy wisdom
from Thy holy heaven, to be in me, and labour
with me, and to teach me what is acceptable to
Thee ; that I may know mine end, and wisely
choose my ways, and order my actions to my
true happiness.

From the days of our LORD's departure from
earth until this day, it has ever been so ; the
world, with its gaieties, and its ambitious aims,
and its crimes, and its splendours, goes on in
exactly the same course, aiming at a happiness
which it never can attain, but which seems

always near its grasp. Thus, princes reign in splendour, and never know until the hour of their death that all they have sought after has been vain; all they have striven for with such constant and eager pursuit, has been emptiness; that all their laughter has been hollow, and all their vaunted pleasures and delights, bitterness and mortification. The tyrant, when he had slain the master who had raised him from degradation, thought he was now on the road to happiness, and he rejoiced with savage exultation. The poet, who had ministered to the enervating enjoyments of men, thought he had found happiness in the enjoyment of those luxuries so dearly purchased. Thus has the world gone dancing on, always rejoicing, and pleased in levities and trifles, until the moment the final doom of all has arrived; then their joy became sorrow, their laughter was turned to weeping, and they fell into the grave in mourning and despair.

But how fared it with those whose portion was "to weep and lament?" They followed their Master and LORD to an ignominious death, they saw Him Whom their soul loved, expire in agony, and they smote their breasts

and returned; but although they thought their cause was lost, and all their honours at an end, the Most High God was their refuge; and He appeared among them for a short space, and then established the new covenant with His Church on earth. Still they had a hard task to perform; and how can men rejoice with a heavy load attached to them? They had to keep in view, and constantly endeavour to imitate, the pattern and example set them by their LORD; besides, His soldiers and servants have a vow upon them, how then *can* they laugh and make merry with the world which they have sworn to renounce? These obligations make them lead a life at variance with the world, which in consequence persecutes and mocks a purity which it seeks not to imitate; and so the Christian goes on his way weeping.

But let me look deeper than the surface, and the picture, before so dark and gloomy, gradually assumes a brighter and more pleasing aspect. Wretched beyond all doubt is that soul whose endeavours and desire are fixed on any object but the LORD; it suffers a thirst never to be allayed, and never to be satisfied.

Wednesday after Third Sunday. 389

The end of living is lost to those who live not to God; and he who desires life for the sake of anything besides, is nothing, and aims at vanity and nothing.

To Thee, gracious God, I commit, I bequeath and devote myself; in Thee is all my trust and confidence, from Whom I expect my second and better life.

The soul which seeks and loves not Thee, doats on the world, and is a slave to sin; always in bondage, never at ease, never secure.

Let my rest be only in Thee during the days of my pilgrimage. Let me be sheltered for ever under the shadow of Thy wings, from the storms and cares of this busy and anxious world. O God, rich in goodness, and the bountiful Giver of heavenly delights, sustain my faintings, relieve my hunger, break the bonds of my captivity, and heal my wounds.

Behold, having passed on my way in weeping, and full of anxious cares and troubled doubts respecting my soul, I stand at Thy door and knock; let that tender mercy, which from on high hath visited us, command the door to be opened, that I may go in and rest with Thee, and be sustained with Thy heavenly Bread; for

Thou art the Bread of Life; Thou art the
Brightness of everlasting Light; Thou art
everything by Which those are supported who
love and live to Thee.

Thursday
AFTER THIRD SUNDAY.

YE SHALL BE SORROWFUL, BUT YOUR SORROW SHALL BE
TURNED INTO JOY.— St. John, xvi. 20.

SEND down, O God of our fathers, and
LORD of mercy! send down Thy wisdom
from Thy holy heaven, to be in me, and labour
with me, and to teach me what is acceptable to
Thee; that I may know mine end, and wisely
choose my ways, and order my actions to my
true happiness.

I am carnal; sold under sin: for that which
I do, I allow not; for what I would, that I do
not; but what I hate, that I do.

“For I delight in the law of God after the
inward man.

“But I see another law in my members,
warring against the law of my mind, and
bringing me into captivity to the law of sin
which is in my members.”

Such are the frailties, such the incumbrances of our mortal state; wretched indeed, if considered either with regard to the weight laid upon it, or its own inability to bear the load.

But blessed and for ever magnified be God, Who, while He afflicts and disciplines us by His providence, does not leave us destitute of the powerful assistances and sweet consolations of His grace. I feel myself indeed oppressed and pierced through with many sorrows and anxious fears; my life, I know, must shortly have an end; the guilt of my sins strikes me with horror and amazement. For death, I know, consigns me over to judgment, and the torments of hell are the due rewards of my evil deeds; what defence to make for myself I cannot tell, in that day, when every action, and word, and thought, will undergo a scrutiny severer and more exact than I am at present able to conceive.

These are such mortifying reflections as must of necessity sink me into despair, did not my LORD, according to His great goodness, interpose, and in the midst of my sorrow and distress support my drooping soul, and assuage my anguish with the prospect of mercy, when I shall most stand in need of it.

Now, instead of the constant sorrow and wringing agony of soul, my hopes are exalted, and my mind carried to the tops of the everlasting hills, to the serene and peaceful regions of bliss. My faith is strengthened, and I am refreshed in the pleasant pastures of the rivers of waters. The gracious LORD shows me the plenteous provision He has made for the entertainment of wearied and famished souls.

This glorious sight makes me forget my sufferings; softens, and even recommends my present troubles; allows me no longer to grovel upon the dust; but calls upon me to leave earth and its vain objects behind. I look upon the tumults and dangers, the follies and miseries of the world, and with a mind composed and chastened, can rest upon Thee, my only hope, my adorable Saviour, Who art the true, the holy, the undisturbed peace of all truly and earnestly devoted Christians.

Friday

AFTER THIRD SUNDAY.

AND YOUR JOY NO MAN TAKETH FROM YOU.—St.
John, xvi. 22.

SEND down, O God of our fathers and
LORD of mercy, send down Thy wisdom
from thy holy heaven, to be in me, and labour
with me, and to teach me what is acceptable
to Thee; that I may know mine end, and
wisely choose my ways, and order my actions
to my true happiness.

Let me raise my thoughts as high, and
stretch them as wide as I can, that I may try,
in some measure, to represent to myself the
nature and perfection of that joy of the saints,
to which there is no equal, neither any like-
ness. That chief good, which is called by
the several names of life, light, blessedness,
wisdom, eternity, and the like, is but one

simple and supreme good, perfect and self-sufficient, without which no other thing can be perfect, nor indeed can it be at all: this good is GOD the FATHER; this is GOD the SON; this is that pure and undivided love, common to FATHER and SON both, even the HOLY GHOST, Who proceedeth from the FATHER and the SON. Here, then, is the one thing necessary, for that must certainly be a necessary good in which all good exists, which is itself-good, the one sole good. How much delight then must spring from the possession of Him Who is goodness itself! Let me not spend time or pains upon things that only hold out delusive hopes of happiness, but let me love this one good; it alone can suffice for all my exigencies, and fill my utmost desires.

It is but lost labour to attempt to describe the bliss reserved for us in our heavenly Father's kingdom; no words can express them; no mind compassed with the flesh can expand enough to conceive them. Many and glorious things indeed are spoken of the city of God, yet half the truth remains untold.

The kingdom of God is full of light and peace, charity and meekness, honour and

glory, sweetness and love, joy and everlasting bliss; in short, of every thing that is good, more and better than can be expressed. Still I may, in my weak manner, endeavour to represent its excellencies, although I cannot do so as I would. I believe the majesty of God to be unspeakably glorious; let me therefore raise myself as high as I can to speak of Him, for surely it is an ennobling and glorious employment to meditate upon the greatness, the excellence, the strength of our great and glorious LORD GOD; and although the most capacious mind cannot comprehend the full immensity of the subject, yet much can be grasped by the understanding that cannot be expressed in words; and, therefore, I may raise my thoughts from this corruptible world to those joys which no man can take from me.

The life to come : what a thought ! Eternal in duration, blessed for all eternity, in which there is the most profound security and tranquillity ; pleasure without passion ; love without fear — love in perfection ; day without night ; activity and strength without decay ; perfect unanimity ; all the souls in it, rapt with the

contemplation of God, and past all apprehension of being deprived of the beatific Presence.

There, is a city blest with the most glorious inhabitants, where all saints and angels take up their abode; the splendour whereof consists in the shining glory of God Himself; where health abounds, and truth reigns for ever; where there is no deceiving, no being deceived; out of which the happy never are expelled, into which the wretched are not admitted.

This is joy; this is joy eternal; never changing, always perfect. Raise thyself, O my soul; live closely to Thy God; fear not what man doeth unto thee; endure unto the end; strive to be perfect; for in that blest place, though all shall be happy, yet all will not be equally so; their bliss will hold proportion to their virtues now, and one star differeth from another star in that glory, because the merciful King rewardeth every man according to his works.

Saturday**AFTER THIRD SUNDAY.**

FOR THE FATHER HIMSELF LOVETH YOU.—
St. John, xvi. 27.

SEND down, O God of our fathers, and
LORD of mercy, send down Thy wisdom
from Thy holy heavens, to be in me, and labour
with me, and to teach me what is acceptable to
Thee, that I may know mine end, and wisely
choose my ways, and order my actions to my
true happiness.

This assurance of the love of His Father to the disciples was given because they loved Him, their Saviour, and had faith in Him. Therefore to all those who love their Saviour, and believe that He is CHRIST, the SON of the living God, this blessing descends. Does the FATHER indeed love me, I cannot help exclaiming when I read this passage? How then can I often

enough express my gratitude for His so regarding me? I must constantly reiterate my grateful thanks for all the blessings I have received from Him. LORD, I beseech Thee, give me a mind truly thankful, that my mouth may be ever full of Thy praise, and my heart overflow with love for all Thy infinite goodness to me.

My soul, let the greatness of the mercy of Thy God never slip out of Thy mind; consider that He never withheld any demonstration of His kindness, which thy situation required; therefore, how great is His love to thee. Surely He could not be more tender of my safety, more ready to relieve my distresses, to comfort all my sorrows, to supply all my wants, to guard me in all dangers, if He had me only to care for; so watchful does He shew Himself over all my affairs, so ever present, nay, even preventing my wishes. Wheresoever I go, He accompanies me; whatsoever I do, He strengthens and succours me. He aids me in my attempts, and supplies my shortcomings.

When I consider this ever tender care, this watchful providence and continual presence of my God, I am lifted up, and transported be-

yond myself; my mind is enlarged, my understanding is brightened, my heart and affections purified. I remember my past sorrows; all my remorse — the anguish of my soul; and I am transported with joy that I have found a God Who is willing to pardon; a Redeemer Who is Almighty to save. Cast all thy care upon Him, O my soul, for He careth for thee; be not anxious; trust in Him; He will be within thee to strengthen thee, without thee to guard thee, over thee to shelter thee, beneath thee to hold thee up, before thee to guide thee, after thee to forward thee, round about thee to secure thee.

Blessed art Thou, O LORD God of Israel, and Father from everlasting to everlasting. Thine, O LORD, is the greatness, and the power, the triumph and the victory, the praise and the strength; for Thou rulest to save all, in heaven and earth.

At Thy face every king is troubled and every nation.

Thine, O LORD, is the kingdom and the supremacy over all, and over all rule.

With Thee is wealth; glory is from Thy countenance.

Saturday after Third Sunday. 401

Thou rulest over all, O LORD, the Ruler of all rule; and in Thine hand is strength and power, and in Thine hand to give to all things greatness and strength.

Now, LORD, we confess to Thee, and praise Thy glorious Name. *Amen.* .

The Annunciation
OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.

BEHOLD THE HANDMAID OF THE LORD ; BE IT UNTO ME
ACCORDING TO THY WORD. — St. Luke, i. 38.

WE beseech Thee, O LORD, pour Thy grace into our hearts ; that, as we have known the Incarnation of Thy SON JESUS CHRIST by the message of an angel, so by His Cross and Passion we may be brought unto the glory of His Resurrection ; through the same JESUS CHRIST our LORD. *Amen.*

Let me, on this great festival, solemnly adore the Word made Flesh. On this day the angel was sent from God to the Virgin Mary. The young and spotless Virgin was occupied in her usual quiet and calm devotions ; those devotions which, in the unostentatious duties of a quiet life, had knit her heart to her God,

and had made her fit to be selected as the instrument for bringing into the world the eternal Son of God. Great are the mysteries of this high subject. I may not seek curiously to enquire why God chose this mode of bringing His Son into the world; why He did not dispense with the usual method of doing so, and at once send the Holy Child to her whom He had selected as His nurse and attendant; I can only adore and wonder at the mystery, and at the condescension of Him Who did not abhor the Virgin's womb.

The angel made his wonderful announcement to Mary: "Behold thou shalt conceive and bear a Son, and shalt call His name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the LORD GOD shall give unto Him the throne of His father David." Let me attentively read over the astonishing and affecting narrative, and then let me especially consider the conduct of the Virgin Mary. At that time, the expectation of the promised Messiah had reached its height among the Jewish people; the time pointed out by prophecy had arrived, and there was a general

looking out for "Him that was for to come." No doubt all the women of Judah were desirous of becoming the mother of the Messias.

Under these circumstances the salutation of the angel could not fail to be the most exciting that could be made; and how does Mary receive it? Not with exclamation and noise; but she cast in her mind what manner of salutation it could be; her well-regulated thoughts were not sent astray by the unexpected event; but she entered into her own mind, and drew therefrom all the quiet reasonings and information she had stored there, and she possessed her soul in peace; but as the angel went on in his announcement, Mary was led to ask one question; and, when reminded by the angel of the unbounded power of God, she yielded up herself in devout submission, and exclaimed, "Behold the handmaid of the LORD; be it unto me according to thy word."

There never was faith like this—never obedience so marked, so perfect. Let me endeavour to follow so holy an example. Here is a mystery so deep that the understanding of man cannot fathom it. Here is an instance of

divine love so high, that finite capacities cannot reach up to it — **THE WORD MADE FLESH** — this is the mystery. “The Word was made Flesh and dwelt amongst us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the Only Begotten SON of the FATHER,) full of grace and truth:” this is the fact. Believe, my soul — adore thy gracious and merciful God, and say, Behold the handmaid of the LORD! But, beyond this, I believe that if I, in holy devotion, in the quiet performance of my daily duties, in love to my God and in charity to my neighbour, seek to be the handmaid of the Lord, He will then vouchsafe to come into my soul; I shall conceive Him there, nourish Him with ardent affections, and bring Him forth in a life of piety; and that then He will abide in me and I in Him for ever. What can this be? O my gracious, most blessed, most transcending Saviour! Thou dost not despise Thy poor creature; but Thou dost require such faith, such love, such devoted calm self-resignation, as were the Virgin Mary’s. Cultivate in me this holy and happy frame of mind, O Saviour, and then send me what Thou wilt to try me —

affliction of any sort, so Thou art with me ; —
and even if for a season Thou withdraw Thy
sensible comforts, still let me put my sure
trust in Thee, and exclaim : Behold the hand-
maid of the LORD !

St. Mark's Day.

AND HE GAVE SOME, APOSTLES; AND SOME, PROPHETS; AND SOME, EVANGELISTS; AND SOME, PASTORS AND TEACHERS; FOR THE PERFECTING OF THE SAINTS, FOR THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY, FOR THE EDIFYING OF THE BODY OF CHRIST. — Ephesians, iv. 11, 12.

O ALMIGHTY God, Who hast instructed Thy Holy Church with the heavenly doctrine of Thy Evangelist St. Mark; give us grace, that, being not like children carried away with every blast of vain doctrine, we may be established in the truth of thy Holy Gospel, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD. *Amen.*

Almighty God, in His loving care for His Church, has given various gifts to men. They are given for our use, and for our edification; and every festival, as it comes in its yearly round, reminds us of the good gifts purchased for us. St. Mark's work and his gift was that of an Evangelist; as such, his gift is still in

active operation among us; but when he was yet alive, he added the vocation of a pastor and teacher to his other high calling; and he died the death of a martyr, to preach to the Church universal, his faith, and his hope, in CHRIST JESUS.

St. Mark journeyed about with St. Paul, and ministered to the comfort of the great apostle during his wants and imprisonment. When death had ended the earthly warfare of St. Paul, St. Mark again joined St. Peter; and wrote his Gospel under the direct guidance and dictation of that most zealous of men.

As St. Mark listened to St. Peter's narrative of His beloved Master, so let me study his gospel, with the reverent attention which we pay to words spoken by the eye-witness of any remarkable fact. The devout and reverent study of Holy Scripture will lead to the raising and confirming of my faith; will instruct me in everlasting righteousness, and will give me that knowledge which will prevent my being carried about by every blast of vain doctrine. In this age, men are like the Athenians of old, who spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new

thing: and as we must always be prepared against the prevailing vice of the age in which we live, my duty is so to study Scripture, especially the Gospels of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, that my faith may become firm built, and founded on a rock; and that I may hold fast the profession of my faith and hope without wavering, looking to JESUS, and by His example and His sufferings, cheered on both to do and to suffer whatever may be necessary to maintain His glory, and also to work out my own salvation.

Blessed be the grace of God, Who has attested throughout the Catholic Church, the truth delivered to us by His apostle and evangelist, the chief assistant and companion of St. Peter. Beautiful, most beautiful, are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of Peace. They minister before the Throne, and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, LORD God Omnipotent, Who Was, and Is, and Is to come!

St. Philip and St. James.

BLESSED IS THE MAN THAT ENDURETH TEMPTATION : FOR WHEN HE IS TRIED, HE SHALL RECEIVE THE CROWN OF LIFE, WHICH THE LORD HATH PROMISED TO THEM THAT LOVE HIM.— St. James, i. 12.

O ALMIGHTY God, Whom truly to know is everlasting life; grant us perfectly to know Thy SON JESUS CHRIST to be the Way, the Truth, and the Life; that, following the steps of Thy holy apostles, Saint Philip and Saint James, we may steadfastly walk in the way that leadeth to eternal life; through the same Thy SON JESUS CHRIST our LORD. *Amen.*

This day we hold in remembrance two holy men, who, joined together in Christian brotherhood, preached the gospel of CHRIST JESUS, and suffered martyrdom in His cause, it is supposed, on this day.

Philip of Bethsaida followed our LORD on His first gracious invitation; and brought

Nathanael to the Saviour's feet, after having borne testimony to His being the LORD, from his perfect knowledge of the law and the prophets. Philip is not often mentioned in Scripture; one doubting question he puts, and one full answer suffices to show him the wonderful mystery of the Divine Unity.

Again, after having passed through the fiery trial of his Master's sufferings and death, we see St. Philip baptizing the devout eunuch between Jerusalem and Gaza; and history furnishes the information that at Hierapolis, in Phrygia, he suffered martyrdom by crucifixion, thirty years after he had witnessed the glorious ascension of that Master, for Whose cause he gladly yielded up his life.

St. James, called "the LORD's brother," was the son of Cleophas and Mary, and was therefore cousin, according to the flesh, to Him Whom he loved steadfastly, and died rather than renounce.

There is a mention of the appearance of our LORD after His Resurrection to St. James, but the subject of that interview is not revealed. St. James, called by way of distinction, "the

less," became the first bishop of Jerusalem. His task in preaching JESUS to a worldly, self-seeking people, full of the pride of intellect and of the notions of a false philosophy, was no easy one; prayer was his only refuge, and he poured out his soul to his God, seeking, in communion with Him, that comfort which the world gave him not. He was killed by the furious mob, at the instigation of the chief priests and scribes, while endeavouring to address the people. Thus ended a life of trial, difficulty, labour, and persecution.

The grace of God poured upon this holy man had lighted in him such a flame of devotion, such an earnestness in prayer, that all his troubles were light to him.

What are thy troubles, thy hindrances, O my soul; what are any trials or hindrances in these days, compared with those so triumphantly overcome by St. James? Let the consideration of the all-powerful aid of the Holy Spirit kindle in thee much courage in thy Christian warfare; if thou seekest it in earnest, it will be granted thee in such abundance that, if thou art called upon to yield thy life rather

than thy faith, thou wilt have strength to lay it down cheerfully and willingly, remembering thy Saviour's exclamation : " Be of good cheer ; I have overcome the world."

End of Part II.







